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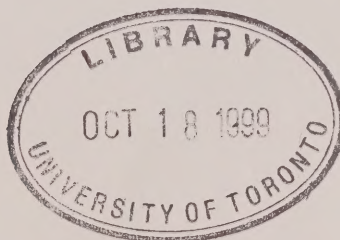
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**ACTION FROM IRELAND -
THE GREAT FAMINE PROJECT**

THE IMPORTANCE OF GROSSE ILE TO THE IRISH WORLDWIDE

A BRIEF PRESENTED

BY

DON MULLAN

ON BEHALF OF AFri (ACTION FROM IRELAND)

- THE GREAT 'FAMINE' PROJECT -

TO THE PARKS SERVICE OF ENVIRONMENT CANADA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN MONTREAL

MONTREAL, MAY 20th, 1992.

PREFACE

Dia daoibh go léir.

Is mór an onóir dom a bheith anseo ó Éirinn, agus a bheith i láthair ag an gcuinníú tábhachtach seo faoi Grosse Ile. Tháinig mé trasna an Aigéin Atlantaigh chun cabhrú libh tábhacht Grosse Ile a thuiscint - an tábhacht a bhaineann leis ó thaobh staire, cuimhneacháin agus dhúchas na hÉireann. Is cuid de stair na hÉireann dúinne Grosse Ile. Is oileán é a bhéas mar áit oiliúreachta againne sna blianta atá le teacht, nuair a bheimid ag comórach céad is caoga bliain ó aimsir an Ghorta Mhóir in Éirinn.

INTRODUCTION

I crossed the Atlantic Ocean yesterday, with one purpose in mind - to address this public hearing concerning the Development Concept of Parks Canada with respect to Grosse Ile.

At approximately 12 noon, I was crossing the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Way below, I could see the ice-packs beginning to break-up, making Québec and Montréal, once again, accessible by sea.

Nowadays, inter-continental travel is so easy, it is near impossible for us to imagine the hardships and terror endured by the millions of Irish refugees who, reminiscent of today's Vietnamese and Haitian boat people,

were forced to flee colonial brutality and an artificial hunger in the land of their birth.

The sight of the mighty St. Lawrence caused me to recall how, 145 years and 6 days ago, the 'Syria' was the first ship to arrive at Grosse Ile from Ireland, with 73 typhus-stricken passengers admitted to the island quarantine.

145 years ago, tomorrow, four more vessels arrived from Ireland, having between them 220 sick on board. By May 30, 1847, there were 1,200 sick on Grosse Ile, whilst along the St. Lawrence, some 35 ships, with 12,000 passengers, many of whom were ill, formed a line three kilometres long. Grosse Ile's 'Summer of Sorrows' had begun.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GROSSE ILE

I come today as the representative of AFri (Action From Ireland), an Irish 'Third World' agency, which has as its international patron the Nobel Prizewinner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Cape Town. I am also here in my capacity as director of AFri's GREAT 'FAMINE' PROJECT which I will outline to you later.

More than anything I say, AFri wishes my presence to state very clearly the importance of Grosse Ile in the collective memory of the Irish worldwide. Indeed, outside of Ireland, Grosse Ile is recognised by us as the

most important and evocative Great 'Famine' site on Earth.

CANADIAN SAILORS

Before proceeding however, I would like to acquaint you with a personal story which has, I believe, a relevance to the sensitive matters we are gathered here to consider.

I now live in Dublin, Ireland. I was born however in Derry, at my family home on the hill of Creggan, high above the river Foyle, in a part of Ireland which is still occupied by Britain. Less than half a mile from where I was born, the main cemetery of our city is located. From the time I was a little boy, I have always been impressed by a long line of some 40 or 50 gray uniform headstones which mark the graves of soldiers and sailors of World War II.

Last Saturday morning, while preparing for this presentation, I telephoned Richard Moore, a very dear friend in Derry, who, 20 years ago this very month, was blinded by a rubber bullet, fired at point-blank range into his ten year old eyes. I asked Richard and his wife Rita to visit the cemetery for me, in order to retrieve the names of some Canadian sailors I knew to be buried there.

At about 1.30 in the afternoon, Rita called me, following their visit.

She told me that she had great difficulty in reading the inscriptions on the headstones, as they were severely eroded by the north Atlantic winds and rain. Richard however, read the following names of seven Canadian sailors with his sensitive fingertips.

H. L. Bullock

W.H. Callowhill

Lt. Ray Master

J. Patterson

J.E. Ley - leading Seaman 1942

E.A. Leyland, Stoker 1st Class 1944

A.E. Scales, aged 18, 1943

Often, as a boy, I quietly filed past these graves with a deep and sincere sadness. Often, I wondered how these young Canadian sailors had come to be buried on the hill where I was born. I often wondered about their families - mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters. Perhaps they had left behind young widows and children. Did any of them ever come to the hill where I was born to shed tears of anguish?

PEOPLE WHO DON'T COUNT

War and starvation have always upset me, for often and inevitably, they result in the severing of precious human relationships. Almost always

it is the poor and humanity's little people who are their victims. Indeed, one of the most insightful definitions of 'Third World' people I have ever encountered was that given by a Caribbean theologian who described them as 'people who don't count'.

The GREAT 'FAMINE' PROJECT which AFri is currently developing, recognises that for too long, the almost two million people who perished, so unjustly, as a consequence of Ireland's Great 'Famine', could indeed be categorized and defined as 'people who don't count'.

It is an extraordinary anomaly that in spite of the watershed which the Great 'Famine' was in Irish, and indeed, Canadian and world history, no national monument has been raised in Ireland to the memory of those who perished.

THE TIME HAS COME

All nations hold dear the memory of their dead and the time has arrived for the Irish worldwide to honour the memory of their forefathers and foremothers who, through seven centuries of unjust British colonial policies, were reduced to nakedness and hunger in the ancient land of their birth. The time has come to honour the memory of forefathers and foremothers who were themselves the descendants of a people who made Ireland a European centre of learning and enlightenment during the Dark Ages.

Currently, AFRI is in the process of locating the several hundred unmarked, forgotten and dishonoured mass graves which hold the remains of the over one million people who perished on the island of Ireland alone, during the so-called Great 'Famine'. Already we are involved with local communities in having these burial places set aside with the simple dignity they deserve. The time has arrived for the Irish to rid ourselves of the burdens of shame and inferiority which too many centuries of colonial domination forced upon us. Our collective consciousness is now maturing to a point where we no longer see the Great 'Famine' as an event for which we should feel ashamed - as can be deduced from our failure in the past to understand and embrace this painful and traumatic imposition.

TRIBUTE

Within this context I have come here today to offer my support and encouragement to the many Irish-Canadian groups who are anxious to ensure that the sanctity of Grosse Ile, as a place of profound Irish significance, is protected and preserved. I would especially like to pay tribute to the Ancient Order of Hibernians who recognised the importance of Grosse Ile at a very early stage through the erection of the magnificent Celtic Cross on Telegraph Hill. I also wish to pay tribute to Agriculture Canada who, in recent years, began the process of respecting the mass graves on Grosse Ile where several thousand nameless Irish men, women and children are buried.

WORLDWIDE IMPORTANCE OF GROSSE ILE

I have come also to impress upon Parks Canada the importance of Grosse Ile as a place of Irish pilgrimage during this decade when we shall commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Great 'Famine' of 1845-49. To emphasize this point, I would like to read to you a short statement given to me this morning by Mary-Lou Armstrong, a founder member of "The Wild Geese", an American-Irish organization based in Connecticut.

"Grosse Ile is important to the Irish of the entire North American continent, not just Canada, and this dimension must be respected and considered. The Wild Geese of Connecticut are only one of many American-Irish groups who would hope to organize pilgrimages to Grosse Ile during this decade when we recall the tragic events in Ireland which forced our people to leave the land of their birth".

AFri's GREAT 'FAMINE' PROJECT - CANADIAN AND GROSSE ILE DIMENSIONS

To help Parks Canada understand the importance of this decade to the Irish I would like to tell you about AFri's GREAT 'FAMINE' PROJECT. This is a multi-disciplined project and since the ideas we are developing are too numerous to list here, I will mention some with a very definite Canadian and Grosse Ile dimension:

- In April 1991, the Irish national broadcasting company, RTE, broadcast a 3 part dramatization of the diary of Gerald Keegan, which was first published in Canada in 1895. The broadcast was highly acclaimed.
- In June 1991, James Mangan's book, "The Voyage of the Naparima substantially based on the diary of Gerald Keegan, was published in Ireland. The book, which tells the story of Grosse Ile, became an instant bestseller with 10,000 copies sold. The diary is now in its second edition.
- Great North Productions, Alberta, are soon to begin shooting a film, based on the diary of Gerald Keegan.
- The highly acclaimed and award-winning Irish television documentary team 'Radharc', have just broadcast in Ireland, a major 4 part history of the Great 'Famine' entitled "When Ireland Starved". Part 4 of the documentary series substantially deals with the Grosse Ile experience. Radharc have also devoted an entire programme to the subject of Grosse Ile in a documentary series dealing with the Irish in Canada, yet to be broadcast.
- On Friday, May 30, 1992, the Lord Mayor of Dublin will unveil a specially commissioned plaque in his Mansion House residence.

recalling the generosity of First Nations located in Upper and Lower Canada, who, together with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, sent famine-relief to Ireland in 1847.

- On July 19, 1992, AFRI's 5th annual Great 'Famine' walk in Co. Mayo will be led by Marianna O'Gallagher of Quebec, who will tell the story of the Irish experience on Grosse Ile.
- On September 7, 1992, a group of 100 Irish people will begin walking from Oklahoma to Mississippi (a distance of some 500 miles), recalling the Choctaw 'Trail of Tears'. Through this symbolic action we wish to thank this American First Nation for their humanity during our darkest hour.
- Around May-June 1994, it is our plan to bring a similar group to Canada to walk 200 miles along the St. Lawrence to Montmagny and then onto Quebec City, following a visit to Grosse Ile. This walk will be a symbolic pilgrimage of remembrance and also an opportunity for the Irish to thank the people of Quebec for their humanity in giving a home to hundreds of Irish children who became orphans during the coffin-ship crossings from Ireland to Canada.
- In 1995, Paddy Maloney and the Chieftains will begin performing the Great 'Famine' Symphony which he is currently composing for

traditional musicians with orchestral accompaniment. The story of Grosse Ile is one of the themes Maloney intends to deal with as part of the Symphony. Grosse Ile would be a very appropriate setting for the Symphony's North American premier.

- In 1997, it is our intention to organise an Atlantic crossing from Ireland to Grosse Ile, recalling the hundreds of Coffin-ships which carried hundreds of thousands of Irish refugees to the North American continent.

CONCLUSION

These are just some of the ideas we are currently developing as we approach the 150th anniversary of the so-called Great 'Famine'. I hope it helps Parks Canada to understand the reverence and respect with which the Irish remember, in particular, Grosse Ile.

Earlier I spoke to you about my visits, as a young boy, to the graves of the young Canadian sailors who died during World War II. Often I returned to these graves never fully understanding why.

Looking back now, it is clear to me that I wanted to ensure that their lives were not forgotten. I also sensed that their resting place was

sacred to all Canadians. In essence, a part of Canada was buried on the hill where I was born, and I felt moved to respect and reverence these small plots of earth.

In 1989 I had the sombre privilege of visiting Grosse Ile. I had come from Ireland to gently stand at the mass graves of some 12000 of my people who had no names. In many ways this was their final indignity.

I was in Canada, but a part of Ireland lay below my feet.

As I stood there, pondering the inhumanity which had forced them to leave their homeland, I found myself remembering the poor of today's world, whose experience and fate are so similar.

I realised then that Grosse Ile must become a place of quiet pilgrimage where the Irish and other European nations who passed through it on their way to America, are encouraged to examine their conscience with regard to the world's poor today.

The Peruvian theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez, has, I believe, expressed eloquently, what Grosse Ile can become to a world on the brink of a new millenium:

"Our view of the past must not be impelled by nostalgia but by hope.

It is not a fixation on the painful and traumatic events of the past, but rather a concern about contemporary poverty and a conviction that only a people which has retained its memory can change its situation and build a better world."

Thank you.

ACTION GROSSE-ILE

ACTION GROSSE-ILE

BRIEF TO ENVIRONMENT CANADA - PARKS SERVICE

REGARDING PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT FOR

GROSSE-ILE, NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

PUBLIC HEARING:

MONTREAL, MAY 20th, 1992

ACTION GROSSE-ILE

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of "The Famine" and Grosse-Ile | page 11 |

IN 1988, WHEN THE THEN ENVIRONMENT MINISTER DECLARED THE ISLAND A NATURAL HISTORIC SITE HE SAID "GROSSE-ILE WILL NOT BE A SOMBRE PLACE TO COMMEMORATE DEATH AND DISEASE, BUT RATHER A WELCOMING PLACE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT". (THE GLOBE & MAIL, NOVEMBER 10, 1990). THE TRUE MEANING AND REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THAT SOMEWHAT CLOUDED STATEMENT ONLY CAME TO LIGHT VERY RECENTLY WITH THE RELEASE OF ENVIRONMENT CANADA, PARKS SERVICE "PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT", DATED MARCH 1992.

ACCORDING TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT, "VAST NUMBERS OF IRISH HAD LEFT THEIR COUNTRY SINCE THE 1820s TO ESCAPE OVER-POPULATION, REPEATED FOOD SHORTAGES AND THE REALLOCATION OF LAND BY LANDLORDS AND, FROM 1845, THE GREAT POTATO FAMINE" (PAGE 9).

IN FACT, EVER SINCE THE LEGISLATIVE "UNION" OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND IN 1800 THERE HAD BEEN PERENNIAL HUNGER AND HARDSHIP IN IRELAND. WHILE MORE THAN AMPLE FOOD WAS PRODUCED ANNUALLY TO FEED THE POPULATION - OF CLOSE TO NINE MILLION - IT HAD TO BE EXPORTED TO ENGLAND TO PAY RACK RENTS TO ABSENTEE LANDLORDS AND TO PAY FOR BRITISH MANUFACTURED GOODS: THE SO-CALLED "ACT OF UNION" HAD SUPPRESSED, BY LAW, IRISH MANUFACTURING.

THE LANDLORDS PLAYED A SORRY PART IN THE TRAGEDY OF THE "FAMINE". GENERALLY, THEY WERE NOT WEALTHY ENOUGH TO FOREGO THE PROFITABLE MARKET IN ENGLAND IN ORDER TO KEEP THE FOOD IN IRELAND TO FEED THE STARVING PEASANTS. WHO WOULD PAY THEM? THEY WOULD BE RUINED! WITH THE REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS, CATTLE RAISING WOULD SOON BRING LARGER RETURNS THAN GRAIN-GROWING. THIS MEANT EVICTING THE NATIVE TENANT FARMERS, HIRING A FEW HERDSMEN AND TURNING THE LAND TO PASTURE. TO ACHIEVE THIS END, "FAMINE" WAS ONE SOLUTION TO THE ABSENTEE LANDLORD'S PROBLEM.

BY 1844, THE POPULATION OF IRELAND HAD BECOME TRULY ALARMING TO ENGLISH POLITICIANS: AT THE CALL OF THE PACIFIST, O'CONNELL, IT HAD PARADED ITSELF IN MASSES OF 500,000 STRONG, ALL DEMANDING "REPEAL OF THE UNION", i.e. DISMEMBERMENT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE. THAT SAME YEAR THE LANDLORD AND TENANT COMMISSION, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF LORD DEVON, AN ABSENTEE LANDLORD HIMSELF, FOUND IT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO CONSOLIDATE FARMS AND REMOVE ONE MILLION PEOPLE FROM THEIR MISERABLE HOLDINGS, WHILE FOUR MILLION ACRES OF ARABLE LAND WENT UNTILLED. THE COMMISSION CONSIDERED EMIGRATION TO BE PECULIARLY APPLICABLE AS A REMEDIAL MEASURE.

IT IS TRUE THAT THE STAPLE CROP, THE POTATO, FAILED IN IRELAND IN "BLACK '47", ALONG WITH THE REST OF EUROPE, BECAUSE OF THE BLIGHT. HOWEVER, THE LANDLORDS CONTINUED TO TAKE FROM THE TENANT FARMERS ALL OTHER PRODUCE WHICH WOULD HAVE KEPT THEM FROM THE ARTIFICIAL FAMINE. THE POLICY WHICH CREATED THE "FAMINE" WAS THE LAND LEGISLATION OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT .

THE FACTORS WHICH PRODUCED THE "FAMINE" INCLUDE THE "ACT OF UNION", THE REFUSAL OF THE BRITISH LEGISLATION TO STOP EXPORTS OF THE MORE THAN ABUNDANT FOOD SUPPLY OR TO INTERFERE WITH THE COLLECTION OF RACK-RENTS (WHICH INCLUDED PAYMENT OF TITHES TO MINISTERS OF AN ALIEN RELIGION), THE REFUSAL TO PROTECT THE IMPROVEMENTS OR RIGHTS OF THE CHATTEL TENANTS AND THE FACILITIES AND INDUCEMENT TO WHOLESALE EVICTION;

THE AFFECTS OF THE ARTIFICIAL FAMINE, A GIGANTIC ATROCITY, WERE MANY AND LASTING. ALMOST ONE-THIRD OF THE POPULATION DISAPPEARED, LITERALLY OVERNIGHT, OF WHICH ONE MILLION DIED IN AGONY; THE ROADS, TOWNS AND VILLAGES WERE IMPASSABLE WITH THE GAUNT FORM OF THE STARVING OR DEAD AND EVERY SHIP (THE "COFFIN SHIPS") WAS FREIGHTED WITH HUMAN BALLAST; IN ALL SOME TWO MILLION FLED IN TERROR. THE ANCIENT SPORTS, PASTIMES, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF THE GAEL DISAPPEARED EVERYWHERE AND, TO THIS DAY, IN MANY PARTS OF IRELAND, HAVE NEVER RETURNED.

THE STORY OF THE SO-CALLED "FAMINE" IS ONE OF THE SADDEST AND MOST DREADFUL IN ALL OF HISTORY. NEVER BEFORE, AND SCARCELY SINCE, HAD THE WORLD BECOME WITNESS TO A GREATER ACT OF MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN. NORMALLY, HISTORIC EVENTS ARE IDENTIFIED WITH THOSE WHO PERPETRATED THEM, NOT THE VICTIMS. OVER THE PAST ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS THE WORLD HAS MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE BY LEAVING REMEMBRANCE OF THE "FAMINE" MAINLY TO THE IRISH. IN EFFECT, WE HAVE TURNED A MORAL CATASTROPHE INTO AN ETHNIC GRIEVANCE.

ENVIRONMENT CANADA, THROUGH ITS PARKS CANADA, "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT", NOW ASKS CANADIANS TO EXHIBIT A MOST REPELLANT NATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC, MORAL AMNESIA. AT PAGE 62 OF ITS PUBLICATION IT PROPOSES TO CONCEAL THE REAL HISTORY OF GROSSE-ILE

"IT IS ALSO FELT THAT THERE SHOULD NOT BE TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON THE TRAGIC ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF GROSSE-ILE. ON THE CONTRARY , THE PAINFUL EVENTS OF 1832 AND 1847, WHICH HAVE OFTEN BEEN OVER-EMPHASIZED IN THE PAST, NEED TO BE PUT BACK INTO PERSPECTIVE, WITHOUT ROBBING THEM OF THEIR IMPORTANCE."

NOWHERE IN THE EXHAUSTIVE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT" IS THERE DIRECT MENTION OR REFERENCE TO THE SEVERAL MASS GRAVE-YARDS ON THE ISLAND, CONTAINING THE MORTAL REMAINS OF, AT LEAST, 15,000, AND PERHAPS AS MANY AS 30,000, IRISH VICTIMS OF FEVER, TYPHUS, STARVATION AND COERCIVE LAWS. THEY HAVE NOT BEEN OVER-EMPHASIZED IN THE PAST NOR CAN THEY EVER BE OVER-EMPHASIZED NOW OR IN TIME TO COME.

GROSSE-ILE, AND THE "COFFIN SHIPS" (OPERATED, IN MANY CASES BY BASE AND UNSCRUPULOUS SHIPOWNERS DRIVEN BY AVARICE AND GREED) THAT FREIGHTED THE HUMAN BALLAST THERE IN UNDESCRIBABLE CONDITIONS DURING THOSE TERRIBLE YEARS, IS UNFORTUNATELY ALSO PART OF THE IRISH HOLOCAUST. THE CANADIAN PEOPLE, AND, INDEED, THE WHOLE WORLD, AND RIGHTLY SO, WOULD RISE UP WITH ONE VOICE IN ANGER AND STRONG CONDEMNATION IF ANYONE, MUCH LESS A GOVERNMENT AGENCY, WERE TO FALSELY CLAIM THAT AUSCHWITZ AND BUCHENWALD AND THE TERRIBLE UNFORGETTABLE EVENTS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR "HAVE BEEN OVER-EMPHASIZED IN THE PAST".

GROSSE-ILE IS, INDEED, AN IMPORTANT HISTORIC SITE AND SHRINE. IT IS HALLOWED GROUND, SACRED ESPECIALLY TO THE IRISH RACE WORLDWIDE, A PLACE OF ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE AND SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE. THE SACREDNESS OF BURIAL PLACES IS NOT UNIQUE TO THE IRISH: IT PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS OF PEOPLE UNIVERSALLY. IT IS WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED BY OUR FELLOW CANADIANS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE, ESPECIALLY THE FIRST INHABITANTS OF THIS LAND, OUR NATIVE PEOPLE.

GROSSE-ILE'S LASTING IMPORTANCE AND SPECIAL PLACE IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OUR AMERICAN NEIGHBOURS IS WITNESSED BY THE MOST PROMINENT PHYSICAL FEATURE ON THE ISLAND, THE CELTIC CROSS ERECTED ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY FEET ABOVE THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER. THE INSCRIPTION THEREON IN IRISH DECLARES:

CHILDREN OF THE GAEL DIED IN THEIR
THOUSANDS ON THIS ISLAND HAVING FLED
FROM THE LAWS OF FOREIGN TYRANTS AND
AN ARTIFICIAL FAMINE IN THE YEARS
1847-48. GOD'S BLESSING ON THEM.
LET THIS MONUMENT BE A TOKEN TO
THEIR NAMES AND HONOUR FROM THE
GAELS IN AMERICA. GOD SAVE IRELAND.

TURNING NOW TO THE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT" ITSELF, IT IS OBVIOUS FROM ENVIRONMENT CANADA'S PUBLICATION THAT A "COVER-UP AND WHITEWASH" APPROACH TO "THE FAMINE" AND GROSSE-ILE'S ROLE THEREIN HAS BEEN ADOPTED. IT IS EQUALLY APPARENT THAT THE MALTHUSIANS* AND REVISIONISTS ARE ACTIVELY AT WORK, EVEN WITHIN THE BRANCHES OF OUR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER VICTIM AND TRAGEDY OF THAT SINISTER APPROACH IS THAT THE VERY PEOPLE, OUR QUEBEC BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WHO OPENED UP THEIR HEARTS AND THEIR HOMES TO THE POOR HELPLESS THOUSANDS, ARE DENIED RECOGNITION AND THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN CANADIAN HISTORY. THEIR ANCESTORS ARE DENIED THE KNOWLEDGE

*Followers of Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), an English Clergyman and Economist, known for his theory that population increase is a major cause of poverty and war.

OF A RICH AND REWARDING PART OF THEIR HERITAGE AND THE ROLE PLAYED BY THEIR FOREFATHERS, INCLUDING THE LEGAL ADOPTION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF IRISH ORPHANS FROM THAT TERRIBLE PERIOD. LIKEWISE, THE IRISH ARE BEING ASKED TO CLOSE THEIR EYES AND NOT OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGE THIS GREAT ACT OF KINDNESS AND HUMANITY AT THE SITE OF ITS OCCURRENCE. REGARDLESS OF THE POSITION ADOPTED TO-DATE BY ENVIRONMENT CANADA, JE ME SOUVIENS, AND IRISH MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN EVERYWHERE WILL NOT FORGET OR DEPRECIATE IT AS LONG AS GRASS GROWS AND WATER FLOWS; MERCI QUEBEC.

IN ORDER TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE CAUSED TO-DATE BY PARKS CANADA, AS A FIRST BASIC STEP ENVIRONMENT CANADA MUST CORRECT THE SERIOUS HISTORICAL MISREPRESENTATIONS CONTAINED IN THE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT". IT MUST ALSO OPENLY AND PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF THE MASS GRAVES AND THE BURIAL SITES ON GROSSE-ILE AND THE MONUMENTS, GRAVE MARKERS AND OTHER PHYSICAL FEATURES RELATING TO THAT TERRIBLE PERIOD. FURTHERMORE, AN UNDERTAKING MUST BE GIVEN THAT THEY WILL BE PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND FULLY INCORPORATED AND PERPETUATED IN THE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE. SIMPLY STATED, THE TRUTH AND THE STORY MUST BE TOLD.

ENVIRONMENT CANADA MUST RESPECT ITS OBJECTIVES AND MEET ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GROSSE-ILE. AS OUTLINED IN THE INTRODUCTION TO THE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT" (PAGE 4) THEY INCLUDE:

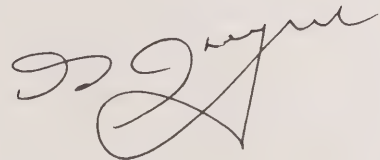
"... to fulfill national and international responsibilities in assigned areas of heritage recognition and conservation; and to commemorate, protect and present, both directly and indirectly, places which are significant examples of Canada's cultural and natural heritage in ways that encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage in a sustainable manner."

TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, GROSSE-ILE WILL BE THE ONLY NATIONAL PARK IN CANADA WHICH WILL COMMEMORATE AND PRESENT THE ROLE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD IN THE BUILDING OF CANADA, AS OPPOSED TO THE CELEBRATION OF THE NATURAL BEAUTY AND BOUNTY OF THIS GREAT LAND INHERENT IN THE OTHER NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. IN THE NAME OF THE COUNTLESS THOUSANDS OF OUR DEAD, WHO ARE UNABLE TO MAKE THIS PLEA THEMSELVES, WE ASK THAT THEY BE ALLOWED TO LIE UNDISTURBED BUT ACKNOWLEDGED WITH PRIDE AND DIGNITY AND IN THE PEACE AND FREEDOM DENIED THEM WHILE ON THIS EARTH.

BY MEANS OF THIS BRIEF, WE HEREBY FORMALLY REQUEST, ON BEHALF OF THE IRISH COMMUNITY, THAT AN INFORMATION MEETING AND, SUBSEQUENTLY, A PUBLIC HEARING BE HELD IN TORONTO, AND OTHER PLACES IN CANADA WHERE PUBLIC INTEREST AND CONCERN SO WARRANTS, WITH ADEQUATE NOTICE AND WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY. THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS NOW EMPLOYED BY PARKS CANADA MUST BE SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED AND ENHANCED BOTH IN THE APPROACH, CONTENT AND EMPLOYMENT. THE PUBLIC MASS MEDIA MUST BE UTILIZED, FROM COAST TO COAST, TO NOTIFY CANADIANS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS SO THAT MEANINGFUL DIALOGUE AND DEBATE CAN BE INITIATED.

FINALLY, A LARGE NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ARISE FROM THE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT" AND WE ASSUME THAT FULL OPPORTUNITY WILL BE PROVIDED TO PURSUE THEM IN THE PUBLIC ARENA.

UNTIL SUCH TIME, HOWEVER, THAT ENVIRONMENT CANADA PUBLICLY CORRECTS THE HISTORIC MISREPRESENTATION AND PROPERLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE COVER-UP AND WHITEWASH (AND OMISSIONS) OF THE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT", AS OUTLINED PREVIOUSLY IN THIS PRESENTATION, THERE IS LITTLE OR NO REAL PURPOSE OR VALUE IN THE IRISH COMMUNITY PURSUING THE SO-CALLED PUBLIC CONSULTATIVE PROCESS. FAILURE BY ENVIRONMENT CANADA TO DO SO, IN OUR VIEW, CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS THE "DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT" REFLECTING THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ON "THE FAMINE" AND THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF GROSSE-ILE.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.J. Leyne', with a stylized, cursive script.

D.J. Leyne,
129 Kingsway,
Toronto, Ont. M8X 2T9
May 20th, 1992
(Tel: (416) 233-9885)

ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS

GROSSE ÎLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

DOCUMENT PRESENTED TO
THE PARKS SERVICE OF ENVIRONMENT CANADA
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE PUBLIC HEARINGS
HELD IN MONTREAL

BY THE

ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS

20 MAY 1992

The Ancient Order of Hibernians is by far one of the oldest Catholic organizations in Ireland. It can trace its origins back to 1565. In the United States it was established in 1836 and here in Canada in 1892. It has also branches in England and Australia.

Friendship, Unity and True Christian Charity are the objectives of our society. These principles have not changed since their inception, when our members ensured the protection of Church and Clergy during the persecutions of the Penal Times in Ireland. Besides working with the Church in every way possible, our organization, wherever represented, has been actively involved as a leader of the Irish Community, always ready to come to the assistance of the less fortunate.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the assistance given to us by civil servants at various levels of government, and particularly single out the work done by Mr. François Duchaine of Agriculture Canada, who took care of the Irish 'Famine' Graves during his tour of duty there. He always endeavoured to respect the historical fact of the Irish connection with Grosse Ile.

In the year 1909 the Ancient Order of Hibernians erected a

Celtic Cross on Telegraph Hill, the highest point of the Island, in order to commemorate the tragic events of 1832 and 1847. A sum of \$25,000 dollars - no small amount in 1909 - was raised by the AOH through public subscription in Canada and the U.S.A. The 46 foot cross, built of Stanstead granite was designed by Jeremiah O'Gallagher, then County President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Quebec City.

Our organization has been the largest private contributor to Grosse Ile, yet this is ignored in your proposal, notwithstanding the fact that the Celtic Cross is one of the spots always shown to the visitors when they tour the Island.

To us, the Burial Grounds are sacred and we take great offense when we read in the "Development Concept" that "...the painful events of 1832 and 1847, which have often been overemphasized in the past, need to be put back in perspective..." If the voices of our deceased forebears could be heard they would surely cry out in anger over this statement! For the truth lies there, for all the world to see, thousands upon thousands of nameless bodies lying in their cold mass graves without a headstone to take them out of the silent anonymity, a stark reminder of the catastrophe of 1832 and the great artificial famine of 1847.

In the past, through the kindness of Agriculture Canada, our Organization has enjoyed the privilege of visiting the island at any time - provided previous arrangements were made. A nominal cost applied, consisting of the expense incurred in renting the boat for the trip from Montmagny to the island and return. Since we have enjoyed this privilege for several years, we would expect this agreement will continue to be respected once Canadian Parks Service takes over the administration.

It is the view of the organization I represent that not enough time was given to prepare a carefully drawn brief, and in this light we would ask the Canadian Parks Service to hold off on their proposed development until such time as the community as a whole has the opportunity to present an alternative plan that will take into consideration the relevance of the Irish dimension of Grosse Ile.

Finally, we must voice a strong objection to the recreational development project as outlined in your proposal. Let us remember this is a graveyard, where over twelve thousand Irish immigrants found their last resting place and not just a place to be turned into a money-making enterprise. We would rather see it as a solemn place, where the visitors could pay homage to those who are buried there and reflect upon that traumatic period of our history.

COMITÉ QUÉBEC-IRLANDE

BRIEF ON "GROSSE ÎLE"

PRESENTED TO PARKS CANADA

**SUBMITTED BY GEORGES BÉRIAULT
FOR THE COMITÉ QUÉBEC-IRLANDE**

DATED: MAY 14, 1992

During the cruel days of the Industrial Revolution, Thomas Malthus, an English clergyman, sat down and wrote his now infamous "**Law of Population**". This law said that while food resources expand at an arithmetical rate, population expands at a geometrical rate. So therefore only through wars, famines and disease Malthus argued, can a balance be struck between population and food supplies.

What Thomas Malthus was doing was not trying to help human populations, he was in fact justifying the human misery that was being inflicted on the majority of his own English people by the greedy land-grabbing aristocratic class, and the emerging industrial bourgeoisie of his time. Malthus did not believe in being kind to the poor because this would upset the equation of population growth by prolonging the lives of poor people. This law made sense to the elites of England. In years to come, this attitude would have a disastrous effect on the people of Ireland. Unfortunately the "**Law of Population**" still finds its proponents among many groups of people today in dealing with the supposedly insurmountable problems of the Third World.

On the 17th of February 1832 the Assembly of Lower Canada passed a resolution that established health boards and that an area for quarantine be established at

Grosse Île. These measures were taken to combat the spread of cholera that had reached England, and was expected to arrive on emigrant ships to British North America.

Early 1832 saw the arrival of an abnormally high number of emigrants from Ireland and not long after, cholera had spread from Grosse Île into Québec City and Montreal and then up into Kingston and York in Upper Canada. By the time the Plague had burnt itself out it was estimated that more than 3,000 had died in Québec City.¹ Although the records are vague it was said at the time that more than the 3,000 figure given for Québec had been buried on Grosse Île. In the most tragic way the beautiful island of Grosse Île in the St. Lawrence River was becoming a part of Irish history. This chapter of Irish history has been described by two Irish authors on the Great Famine as "but a period of greater misery in a prolonged age of suffering."²

On February 19, 1847 Dr. Douglas, the medical officer in charge of the quarantine area on Grosse Île, requested from colonial authorities the sum of £3,000 to prepare for an incoming emigration, stating that during the previous year the quarantine hospital had handled double the amount of emigrants than usual, and that reports from Ireland showed that 1847 would be worse. In the

spring of the year before (1846) the potato crop had failed in Ireland and although the first emigrant ship in 1846 had arrived with healthy and robust passengers, this would all change by August of that year. By August the potato crop had failed completely and the people were beginning to starve. Throughout the fall and into one of the most severe winters on record, emigration continued. Most of the emigrants landed in American ports because the St. Lawrence River was frozen solid. With the coming of Spring and 1847, also came the dreaded "fever" typhus, adding to the problem of starvation. People were crowded onto ships which would become known as "coffin ships". No sanitary conveniences, the poorest quality of food, and water, that was carried in casks used for vinegar or wine on previous voyages, made the water undrinkable.

Unscrupulous shipowners supplied any ship they had to landowners and their agents who now saw the opportunity for ridding themselves of the Irish peasantry. The Malthusian attitude of the British elite had re-appeared this time in Ireland and with a horrible vengeance.

The direct effect of the Great Famine would cause immense suffering on a defenceless people and would have a lasting effect on the population of Ireland. The Great Famine would cause the people of Ireland to develop a profound

hatred of the English connection, their landlords, and the administration in Ireland, who through their measured and calculated incompetence, had caused a catastrophe, a holocaust. For the next fifty years after the Famine, year in and year out, nearly four million Irish people would leave Ireland's shores. The Irish were driven to Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. What is important to understand here is that the Irish Question would now become an international problem. Britain would time and again refer to the distress in Ireland as a domestic problem but the exodus of the Irish would ensure that it would never be a domestic issue again.

Central to the story of this pitiful exodus is Grosse Île. We are sure that Parks Canada is well aware of the details surrounding the tragedy that took place on that island. What we are not sure about is whether Parks Canada understands the meaning of Grosse Île and of the Black Rock at the entrance to the Victoria Bridge in Montréal to the children of the Irish exodus spread throughout North America. That is why the **Comité Québec-Irlande** has joined with many other groups to ask that Parks Canada delay its schedule so that Irish community leaders be given time to consult with their members and then present their ideas on how Grosse Île may be developed as a fitting memorial.

More than one hundred thousand emigrants left ports in Britain and Ireland for Canada or British North America in 1847. By the end of that year approximately one-fifth or 20,000 people had died in Canada. Conservative estimates state that about 5,500 died on Grosse Île, and more than 14,500 died in Montréal, Québec City, Kingston and Toronto. Approximately 17,000 died on the Atlantic voyage. On the 15th of August 1909, a 14-metre high Celtic cross of granite was unveiled by the Ancient Order of Hibernians at the western tip of Grosse Île. By the early 20th Century the Irish had already made their imprint in the building of Québec and Canada. During the canal building era of the 1840's the labour scarcity in British North America had been ended by the massive influx of refugees from a starved Ireland. The Irish became the first major wave of new arrivals to reach Canada who would not be placed directly into farming the land. Along with the surplus population of Québécois forced off the land here, these two groups would form Québec's first pre-industrial working class.

But that lonely Celtic Cross on Grosse Île should be a door to succeeding generations. The cross and Grosse Île should be used to remind succeeding generations of Irish-Canadians and others who visit Grosse Île how hunger was used as a weapon against people, as it is still used today. Grosse Île should also tell the story of the courageous North Americans who went to help the Fever

victims; the doctors, the priests, the nuns, and the citizens of British North America who gave their lives to bring some comfort to the dying. Not many people today realize that a Mayor of Montreal, John Mill, died of the Fever after assisting the Irish refugees.

Between 1963 and 1981 the Government of Canada gave over \$100 million to help the victims of famine throughout the world. Could Grosse Île and the story of that Irish tragedy not be incorporated as a tribute and a memorial in the fight against famine? The official policy of Canada towards its peoples is multiculturalism. But culture is the real way in which people live their lives on a daily basis and by which they can be distinguished from other groups.

The Irish community in Montréal and in Québec is still as vibrant though smaller in numbers today. On May 31st of this year, the **Comité Québec-Irlande** will join the Ancient Order of Hibernians and other groups and friends, on its annual march to the Black Rock in commemoration of those who died of typhus in the sheds along the St. Lawrence River in Pointe St. Charles in 1847. The victims of the Famine in Ireland have not been forgotten. The question of Ireland remains an international issue. Grosse Île, it can be argued, was the terminus for other emigrant groups coming to British North America. But does it have or carry the

same emotional impact in other communities?

On May 30th, 1847 Robert Whyte embarked at Dublin on a ship carrying Irish emigrants to Québec. Robert Whyte had the resources to travel as a cabin passenger and through the diary he kept of the voyage we have an eyewitness account of the frightful conditions faced by his country people under decks. When Whyte reached Grosse Île he watched as a continuous line of ships dumped their human cargo on the shores of Grosse Île. Then Whyte witnessed the arrival of a shipload of German emigrants. That vessel was over-crowded by his accounts. It carried more than 500 passengers. But in his own words "There was no sickness on board and all were neatly clad. During the medical examination each comely fair-haired girl laughed as she passed the doctor to join a group of robust young men."³ For these emigrants the experience of Grosse Île was a completely different one. Robert Whyte was sickened by the state of the hold that carried the Irish to this country. He was told by a Canadian Catholic priest that compared to some, that hold was clean. The failure of the potato crop had affected many areas of Europe. Only in Ireland was food continually exported to Britain while the defenceless were left to starve, many to take typhus and to die in mass graves in Canada.

It is for these reasons that we submit this Brief with many other groups. It is to explain, and have our government officials understand, that in a multi-cultural society different groups must be permitted to hold distinct views as to what is central to their identity as a cultural group. Grosse Île and the Famine experience is not only crucial to Irish Canada, it is important to the Irish experience in North America.

There is not one person who does not know that famine is still very real for countless human beings throughout the world much to our shame. Just as the Famine in Ireland in the 1840's was unnecessary, famine is unnecessary today. It would be impossible in this Brief to explain and simplify the tangle of facts surrounding hunger and famine to landownership then and today. Changes in living conditions with declining populations, technology with food production, civil wars and famine. But the Development of Gross Île in consultation with the Irish community as a commemorative park, with a view to understanding famine, could be a fitting tribute to the 5,500 buried throughout the island. This is only one idea; there are possibly many more.

Speaking for the **Comité Québec-Irlande**, we as a group feel that there has not been enough time for consultation. We feel that Parks Canada is not taking into

account the importance of Grosse Île as a cultural symbol central to the Irish community in Québec and in Canada.

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FLEMING, NORITA

80 Palm Cres.,
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May 20 1992.

Environment Canada, Parks Sec.
3 Bnade St.,
Quebec City, Quebec, G1R 4V7

Mr. Chara,

I am writing this letter in response to
some misrepresentation of the historical record of
Irish immigration to Canada, that you put
forward in your Development Concept March 1992:

"What numbers of Irish have left their country
since the 1820's to escape overpopulation,
repeated food shortages and the reallocation
of land by landlords and, from 1845, the Great
Potato Famine (p.9)."

This claim that impersonal economic forces, not British
colonialism, lay behind the suffering and death is untrue.
Further the proposal to conceal the real history of Grosse

Isle :

"It is also felt that there should not be
too much emphasis on the tragic aspects
of the history of Grosse Ile. On the contrary,
the painful events of 1832 and 1847, which
have been overemphasized in the past, need to
be put back into perspective with other Irish

them of their importance. (p.62)"

I am writing this letter to you, to go on record at your public hearings in Montreal, May 30-1992, stating that the immigrants who fled Ireland between 1832 and 860, and who died in their thousands in the coffin ships and fever sheds in Canada, were driven from their homes by the English Government, whose policy was to clear the land. Further, that this holocaust of suffering inflicted on the Irish people not go unrecorded.

In 1847 when the most devastating of all the potato blights struck and famine ensued, Canada was still serving under the Union Jack. The greatest tragedy of the 1847 Famine, was, that it should never have happened. The contradiction of that famine was that in one of the richest agricultural lands in the world, people were dying of starvation. The food that was being produced was taken for payment of rent, and shipped out of the country to feed the poor. The only food left to the poor

tenant farmer was the potato and perhaps some cabbage and turnips. With the failure of the potato mass starvation ensued. People were dying so fast that their surviving relatives were unable to bury them. The people were starving from an artificially created famine, the result of the crushing force of a relentless universal power. This was the contrived plan of a group of landlords to starve the people to death and rid the Irish of the land, who were an incumbrance to them. This was an immigration of mass expulsion not free choice.

The ships contracted to aid and abet the greedy land lords, were usually logging vessels. On their return voyage having unloaded their cargo of wood, they reloaded with a cargo of humanity, in the hold of the ships that would perpetrate human suffering, degradation, disease and death in its thousands. There are no accurate accounts of the numbers buried at sea, but it is commonly accepted that from Ireland to 1850 90% of the population was

bodies could form a continuous chain of burial crosses. During the ocean voyage further injustices were inflicted on the people, with bad water and near non-existent food provisions added to the human misery.

The Irish people between 1832 and 1860, were a people driven from their homeland by persecution and deprivation of human rights. The knowledge of the shocking mistreatment of the immigrants during their voyage and their subsequent arrival in Grosse Ile broken in health and thousands suffering from typhus, was information deliberately repressed. The policy of the Government then according to a complaint to the Kingston Chronicle June 17th, 1848, was to keep the news of what was happening at Grosse Ile from leaking out. However articles were making headlines elsewhere. An article in "The Gazette" Montreal, Sept. 5, 1847 reads as follows, referring to the fever sheds at Point St. Charles.

"In the hastily erected emergency sheds the people were dying by the score in the crowded sheds, in the stench and heat, desperately

neglected. When there were enough attendants they were hastily tossed into shallow pits nearby where they succumbed to the fever. In all the history of Montreal there is no story more poignant. There were hundreds of orphaned children. Many of the little ones had to be pulled from the arms of a parent who had suddenly died. Older ones were wandering around frantically looking for parents who were already buried in the fur. The scene in the children's shed was beyond description.

It has been proffered that some of the evidence and many of the records of that period were destroyed by fire. In 1909, in a book by Jordan "The Grosse Ile Tragedy", the silence was finally broken after 50 yrs. The island was further held out of reach by making it into a quarantine for cattle, preventing it from becoming a focus.

To-day we owe our people the preservation and acknowledgement of their burial ground, their Hallowed Graveyard. The Irish people who died through forced starvation; forced separation and immigration from their lands; forced to travel on vessels that were not made for the purpose of carrying them.

subsequent arrival to Grosse Ile they were destined to die in their thousands in the poorly erected fever sheds in Grosse Ile, Montreal, Quebec, Kingston, Toronto and other. Those who were criminally responsible for this human holocaust teach us that there is no limit to human depravity when man is motivated by greed, wealth, power and prestige. The perpetrators and collaborators of these events caused the Irish people untold grief and suffering. They paid for it in the thousands with their lives. An apology and an acknowledgement of this happening has to be established. This historic Site at Grosse Ile has to be acknowledged as the Island Graveyard of the Irish famine victims, ~~the~~ dedicated to their courage and sufferings, sacred to their memory. By this acknowledgement, the debt owed to them, can be set right by Remembering.

C.P. Hon Brian Mulroney
C.P. Hon Sean Connolly
C.C. Ms. Teresa Samal.

Norita Fleming.
NORITA FLEMING.

FRÉCHETTE, ERROL

CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE

SUR

LE CONCEPT DE MISE EN VALEUR PROPOSÉ

POUR LE LIEU HISTORIQUE NATIONAL DE

LA GROSSE-ILE

Notes pour la présentation
de Errol Fréchette

Montréal, le 20 mai 1992

Au départ, je voudrais remercier le Service des parcs d'Environnement Canada de me donner cette opportunité de m'exprimer sur un projet de mise en valeur de la Grosse-Ile. Je veux aussi souligner la qualité de la documentation mise à notre disposition.

C'est à titre personnel que je fais cette présentation sans toutefois - et ce sera évident à la lecture de ce texte - faire abstraction de mes fonctions comme directeur administratif du Conseil interprofessionnel du Québec.

Mes intérêts pour cette partie de notre patrimoine peuvent trouver leurs origines dans mes racines irlandaises, mes expériences en scoutisme dans les îles avoisinantes et mes contacts avec des personnes à l'origine de la corporation pour la mise en valeur de la Grosse-Ile. J'ai aussi eu l'occasion de visiter le site à plusieurs reprises.

Je souscris aux principes de mise en valeur décrits dans le document à savoir «la préservation du caractère actuel du lieu en misant essentiellement sur la conservation des paysages et des ressources patrimoniales en place».

Sans expérience aucune pour ce genre de projet, instinctivement, dès ma première visite, j'espérais que le site conserve ses caractéristiques actuelles. J'admets que des travaux devront être effectués pour contrer la détérioration mais, il est à souhaiter, que ces interventions demeurent discrètes.

Peut-être parce que lors de mes visites j'ai eu la chance de m'y trouver dans un cas avec Mère O'Gallagher et dans un autre avec une personne qui a vécu son enfance sur l'Ile, son père ayant été le boulanger, mais, à chaque fois, les bâtiments et les infrastructures dégageaient effectivement une «charge émotive».

Possiblement, en le rattachant au potentiel éducatif des ressources, je crois qu'il serait intéressant de souligner l'apport des professionnels à travers les différentes vocations de l'Ile. Des membres de plusieurs corporations professionnelles y ont exercé leur profession. Je pense, par exemple, aux infirmières, médecins, pharmaciens, médecins vétérinaires, chimistes, etc. N'y aurait-il pas lieu, en collaboration avec les corporations professionnelles concernées, de relever les contributions de ces professionnels.

Une piste possible pourrait être la préparation de modules d'information sur les pratiques des différentes époques;

Des expositions d'instruments ou d'accessoires utilisés;

Les effets des découvertes de certains vaccins ou médicaments;

etc...

Gaelic Athletic Association



MONTREAL SHAMROCK HURLING AND FOOTBALL CLUB

Gerry Hughes
President

Vince Cahill
Vice-President

Kevin Barry
Secretary

Bert McConnell
Treasurer

BRIEF

TO
**
CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE

ON THE

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

FOR

GROSSE ILE

Presented at Public Hearing in Montreal on May 20, 1992

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Gerry Hughes
20/05/92

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was founded in 1884 to foster and promote Gaelic culture through Gaelic games such as Hurling and Football. The origins of these sports are buried in Irish antiquity although no formal organisation existed to codify and regulate the sports until the founding of the GAA.

Although Gaelic Football and Hurling had been played in Montreal for many years the current club, Montreal Shamrock Hurling and Football Club, was officially registered and affiliated with the parent body in 1948. Since that time we have competed against teams from all over North America though primarily those in the North Eastern part of the U.S.A. and Ontario. Currently the Club competes as a member of the Toronto Division of the Canadian County Board. The membership resides mainly, though not exclusively, in the Montreal area and is comprised of Canadians of both Irish birth and origin. At the present time most of the active players are Canadians of Irish origin.

On at least two occasions the Club has won North American Championships and this past weekend, May 16/17, 1992 as part of the Irish Activities of Montreal 350 celebrations, we hosted twelve(12) teams, including four(4) ladies and two(2) minor(under 18), in a tournament. On Sunday evening May 17, 1992 at the Awards Banquet, there was 350 people in attendance.

The GAA is one of, if not, the, largest exclusively amateur sporting organisations in the world. Annually at the Gaelic Football and Hurling All-Ireland Finals held in September in Dublin between 65,000 and 70,000 attend each game. In March of 1990 and 1991 at the Skydome in Toronto teams from Ireland have put on exhibition games before crowds of up to 30,000 people.

The GAA is non-political and includes all ages, sexes, creeds and colours. It has been closely identified with the Irish cultural revival and national movement which began in the last two decades of the last century. This revival was necessiated by the decline and almost total obliteration of the Gaelic tradition, language, and culture including sport, as a result of the death, devastation and emigration inflicted upon Ireland by the British Colonial Power since the Act of Union of 1800 and particularly in the 1840s during the so - called Great Potato Famine.

In 1965-66 the Montreal GAA with others were instrumental in successfully rallying support against the City of Montreal's proposal to remove the "Ship Fever Monument"(The Irish Stone) which is located at the entrance to the Victoria Bridge Street in Pointe Saint-Charles. This as you no doubt know, commemorates the Irish immigrants who died in the Fever Sheds and were buried there in their thousands. You will appreciate therefore that the current executive and membership is keenly interested in any development proposal for Grosse Ile which is an even greater hallowed spot holding the mortal remains of so many more victims of man's inhumanity to man.

The GAA has carefully reviewed the Development Concept information document prepared by Environment Canada, Parks Service and is pleased that not only has the historic significance of Grosse Ile been recognised but that the historic resources therein will be preserved for future generations.

In a number of places the Development Concept document offers great hope and expectation that only a sensitive and appropriate development will be allowed to occur. An example of this is to be found on Page 69, under the heading Development Principles, <respect for the spirit of the site>, where reference is made to the significance of Grosse Ile both **"as a place of pilgrimage, remembrance and contemplation"** and **"as a genuine open - air history book"**. Another example is found on Page 45, under the heading "Statement of Canadian Parks Service Mandate on Grosse Ile" where it is stated that it is intended to:

- " * Preserve the heritage character of Grosse Ile;
- * Make this heritage accessible to Canadians and to the general public;
- * convey to visitors the period of history associated with this site through the themes identified."

Unfortunately a closer reading and examination of the total contents of the document and other related literature being distributed by Environment Canada, Parks Service, causes grave concern. This is all the more heightened when one considers the process and manner by which it was prepared and the procedures followed to-date for public participation and consultation.

One must regretfully conclude that the above mentioned hopes and expectations have not, and will not be realized. The above cited examples are only public relations window dressing and bureaucratic double talk as there has been no attempt, in so far as the Irish Dimension of Grosse Ile is concerned, to give it substance in the proposed development.

Rather, there is a deliberate stated intent to at least de-emphasis, if not avoid the Irish historical relationship with the island, and the causes of the "tragic aspects" and "painful events" that resulted in the death of thousands of Irish there (the Irish Dimension). It can be argued with justification that the history of Grosse Ile is that of the main introduction, under tragic circumstances, of the Irish community to British North America (Canada) and without that relationship there would be very little other reason to consider creating a Historical National Park there.

It is noticeable that the documentation on Grosse Ile published by Environment Canada, Parks Service avoids at considerable effort use of the words "Irish" and "Ireland". The brochure entitled "Grosse-Ile: Lieu Historique national/National Historic Site" and the eight(8) page Development Concept pamphlet contains no reference whatsoever to the "Irish" or "Ireland". Also the Development Concept

information document which is eighty-seven (87) pages long contains the word "Irish" or "Ireland" as few as a grand total of seven(7) times. This is not, it is respectfully submitted, an accident or oversight but a result of deliberate and considerable effort and editing.

Upon calling the Public Consultation advertised phone number and requesting information of Parks Service and Grosse Ile some of our members were disturbed to receive the brochure entitled "Grosse Ile: Lieu Historique national/National Historic Site" rather than the Development Concept information document. An examination of this brochure causes one to wonder if the Public Consultation Process now under way means anything or is it a sham. It would appear from the brochure that the decision to proceed with the Development Concept of March 1992 has been made already. This brochure should be withdrawn from circulation immediately and no such promotional material issued until the Public Consultation Process is completed and the process completed.

For the sake of past generations of unfortunate Irish buried on this sacred and hallowed spot; for the sake of the present and future generations of Irish Canadians that they may know the truth about their ancestors and heritage the Development Concept of March 1992 will be vigorously opposed by the membership of the Montreal GAA. It must be quickly corrected by the Canadian Government and the Irish Dimension properly and fully recognised in any Development of Grosse Ile.

It is noted with particular interest that amongst the objectives of the Canadian Parks Service is the fulfillment of not only national but "international responsibilities" in assigned areas of heritage interest and to commemorate, protect and present such places in ways that encourage public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage.

The last sentence on page 4 mis-states the true international significance of Grosse Ile in Canadian history by not making direct reference to the fact that by far the majority of "European immigrants" that were "quarantined" there were Irish and that there exists there a number of mass graves where thousands of Irish immigrants of 1832 and 1847 are buried.

While reference is made to "the Public Participation Program " this process, related procedures and schedule are not outlined. Neither is it stated that legislation is required to be passed to implement the "approach that the Canadian Parks Service favours". The difference in legal and practical terms that the proposed status of "National Historic Park" will cause, as against it's present status of "National Historic Site" should be clearly outlined for the information of the general public who are not normally involved in such matters.

While the stated intention on page 7 is to draw "as objectively as possible" a brief portrait of the significant role played by Grosse Ile in the history of Canadian immigration, the historical outline as it involves the Irish, particularly on pages 9, 10 and 11 covering the period 1832 to 1860, is both factually incorrect and deliberately misleading.

It is factually incorrect to refer to Ireland as part of "Great Britian". The numbers quoted for "immigrants" and deaths due to typhus both in Canada and during the ocean crossing in 1847 are understated and much less than those of other sources. It is particularly significant that no attempt is made to point out that almost all these immigrants and deaths were Irish.

It is deliberately misleading to not clearly distinguish between the vast majority of non-Irish immigrants who entered the country directly through Quebec City without ever seeing or knowing about Grosse Ile as against the majority of the Irish immigrants who were not allowed to proceed up-river without either being landed or cleared through the inspection procedures at Grosse Ile.

It is both factually incorrect and deliberately misleading to have a footnote that reads as follows:

" Vast numbers of Irish had left their country since the 1820s to escape overpopulation, repeated food shortages, the re-allocation of land by landlords and, from 1845, the Great Potato Famine. From the 1860s, the Irish would emigrate instead to the United States, where the industrial revolution required vast manpower."

Such a error and/or deliberate misrepresentantion causes the Development Concept information document to loose all credibility. The membership of the Montreal GAA, and I am sure many others, must then question the motives and process involved. That there should be only a causal referance on page 18 to the largest Celtic cross erected in North Americia without a referance to it's inscriptions in Gaelic, French and English nor a brief background as to who and why it was erected is unbelievable if not unforgiveable . While there are photographs of many other historical resources, one of the Celtic cross is conspicuous by it's absence. Also in this section it should have been noted that of all the communities in the Canadian mosaic, the Irish have had a tradition of having pilgrimages to this island to commemorate their dead who are buried here. The lazaretto, built in 1847, is not only a "veritable symbol" of the fight against contagious diseases but a living reminder of man's inhumanity to man and the horrific and tragic consequences of British Colonial policies towards Ireland and the Irish. "Lest we forget" would be an appropriate theme for the preservation and display of this physical resource. While on page 22 three buildings are identified as being

associated with the early years of the island, it is noted that of these, the lazaretto and old wash house are classified as having very high heritage value while the third, the electrician's (#11) is not even listed as one of the 15 buildings which were also recognised for their heritage value. Why this has been done should be explained. The lack of any reference to the "mass" graves where the "Irish" immigrants are primarily buried is again regrettably noticeable by its absence as is any reference to the fact that many were buried in unmarked and unknown locations through the island and in the surrounding sea. The ownership and legal status of the Celtic cross, erected in 1909 by the Ancient Order of Hibernians on behalf of the Irish communities of North America, and its immediate surrounding area is of particular significance and interest and should have been addressed under "Ownership status". The Montreal GAA is most anxious that this monument be preserved and maintained in good condition with unhindered access to it by those wishing to reflect on their heritage and their history.

It may be considered an advisable marketing strategy for the regional tourism industry and profitable relations with the community to ensure that the experiences offered to visitors make them **"think about the phenomenon of immigration in societies"**. It will however be a grave disappointment and turn-off for those visitors of Irish heritage if this hallowed spot does not convey the true and complete historical circumstances that caused their ancestors to die here in their thousands.

These were victims, first, of persecution, starvation, greed and eviction in their native land and lastly then, of greed and disease in their transportation and entry into British North America.

Let not the current generation of Canadians do injustice to the memory of these Irish victims who received no justice or sympathy from the hands of their landlords or from the British Colonial Government but who did experience in their final days both spiritual and physical comfort from many gallant Canadians .

National and regional marketing strategies cannot and must not be allowed to dictate the site commemoration and visit-related objectives of this National Historic Site and/or Park. In fact the opposite would not only be in keeping with the international responsibilities of the Canadian Parks Service but also be a better marketing strategy considering the millions of Irish heritage in both Canada and the U.S.A. who reside within a day's driving distance of Grosse Ile.

The Canadian Parks Service must ensure that the participation of local partners in providing services is both appropriate to the sacred and hallowed nature of the island and that it does not impose a financial impediment to those wishing to visit the NHS and/or NHP.

The absence of any reference to the Irish dimension in both the Main and Secondary Theme is strongly objected too and demands correction. In light of the less than satisfactory historical accuracy of the "context" of this information document, there is considerable unease and concern as to the nature of the "contexts" contemplated for both these themes.

The themes if not re-stated to incorporate proper recognition of the Irish involvement, relationship and history (Irish Dimension), are in conflict with the stated objectives and mandate of Canadian Parks Service on Grosse Ile. It is considered that this is one of the basic flaws in the Development Concept. It must be corrected and changed before the Irish community will be more receptive to any proposal for development of Grosse Ile. of the island.

As noted earlier the difference in legal and practical terms that the proposed status of "National Historic Park" will cause, as against it's present status of "National Historic Site" should be clearly outlined for the information of the general public. Also needed is an explanation of why it is necessary to ensure that the status of NHP be conferred by April 1993. The Montreal GAA is is extremely anxious to ensure that this matter which is of particular significance to the Irish communities throughout Canada, if not the world, be dealt with in a thorough and open manner. Canadian Parks Service must be proactive in ensuring that the general public and particularly the Irish fully informed and have adequate opportunity to participate in a meaningful public consultation process on the Development Concept.

This is not considered to be a party political item and the Montreal GAA will not support any effort to make it so as we have and welcome into our membership people who are members of every possible Federal and Provincial political party.

The Montreal GAA looks to the Canadian Parks Services to ensure, as noted earlier, that local participation is not an impediment to access to the island and that this to-gether with adequate parking at point(s) of departure are provided at reasonable and affordable rates.

If the Celtic cross's presence was properly recognised and also the Irish Dimension, it would not be necessary to suggest, as is noted on page 53, that the architectural resources offer limited potential to illustrating historical themes. Also if a theme is to be imported and promoted on Grosse Ile at the expense of one that is native and true to the site, it is no wonder that aids for themes are scarce. An honest map and history will go a long way to rectify these perceived difficulties.

The reference on page 55 to "when the current study is completed " when referring to the island's monuments is not understood and should be fully explained.

The historical and cultural aspects of the site are most important and any commercial operation must respect the history of the site as a sacred and hallowed island.

Entrance fees of \$36 to \$58 per person which have been charged in the past are not considered reasonable and would qualify in our opinion as a impediment to access. Parks Service should play an active role in providing access to this site.

That Canadian Parks Service has deliberately adopted improper themes is evident from the results of the market study and the reference on page 62 to the fact that "both current and potential clienteles clearly state that the theme of immigration has little impact" on the <<image>>. Also the following paragraph:

" It is also felt that there should not be

too much emppasis on the tragic aspects of the history of Grosse Ile. On the contrary, the painful events of 1832 and 1847, which have often been overemphasised in the past, need to be put back into perspective, without robbing them of their importance"

must be withdrawn immediately and an apology offered to the Irish throughtout the world for allowing it to be included in an Canadian Government publication. Facts are facts and history cannot be changed no matter how much one might wish it to be and it must not be re-written to suit perceived commercial purposes.

The Development Concept information document should contain an appendix listing the **"other parties involved"** who have had the opportunity **"in recent years"** to express their feelings on Grosse Ile and listing the other representatives of the Irish Community who have given imput to the future role of Grosse Ile. It is noted that this organisation was not made aware of this matter until shortly before the April 7, 1992 information session in Montreal, nor were, that we know of, any one of our sister Irish societies in Montreal. This is unacceptable and must be put on a proper and more satisfactory basis.

The development principles are unfortunately just some nice public relations words and phrases unless they are translated into real meaningful terms in the actual development. There is every evidence that in the translation of the principles and as long as it is not recognised in the themes, the Irish Dimension will be de-emphasised if not ignored and the island's history placed "in context" to suit a stated marketing strategy. This is totally unacceptable to the membership of the Montreal GAA.

The Canadian Parks Service is strongly urged to revise their Development Concept to include appropriate recognition of the Irish Dimension and to use the most modern audio-visual and other techniques to allow visitors of this and future generations to obtain a true and full appreciation of the Irish and international historical significance of this island.

The Celtic cross and mass graves should not only receive regular maintenance but they should be actively protected from desecration while allowing the visitor direct contact with these "authentic" witnesses to the past and be included in the various tour <<menus>> offered.

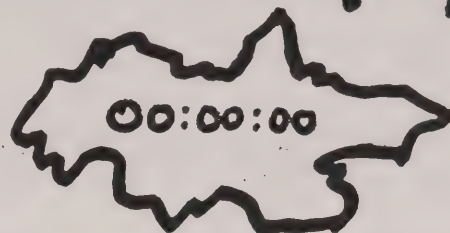
GELTMAN, HAROLD

le 20 mai, 1992: 14:30 Complexe Guy Favreau, Montréal-Québec

Intervention: mémoire écrite et présentation verbale

10 pages

Harold Geltman
4830 Lacombe
Montréal, Québec
H 3 W 1 R 5 Canada
North America
Planet Earth
tel: 514-738-1833
le 20 mai, 1992



Président et membres des audiences publiques:

Communications: Réception du document de consultation: Laurent Tremblay
"La Grosse Ile: Concept de Mise en Valeur" Le Directeur
30/4/1992

Confirmation de présentation de mémoire:

téléphone: 5/13/1992 17:00,
lettre: 5/15/1992

Rose-Aimée Buchard
Coordonnatrice de la
Participation du Public

General biographical statement:

Harold Geltman is a private citizen and is not in the remunerative employment of any corporation nor any government. The views expressed in writing and verbally are my own and of my responsibility.

Cet intervention fait part de l'étape de travail depuis 1985 à propos des interventions devant des commissions publiques et privés, des gouvernements et des compagnies. Harold Geltman avait 4 objectifs:

- 1) expliquer pourquoi j'ai quitté le gouvernement fédéral en 1972.
- 2) présenter mes réactions publiques aux idées des gouvernements, l'entreprise privé et la société.
- 3) introduire les concepts et alternatives de Harold Geltman.
- 4) préparer les prochaines étapes d'évolution et transition dans l'optique de construire une meilleure ville-métropolitaine avec un monde améliorant.

Pour ceux qui ont suivi les interventions écrites et verbales de monsieur Harold Geltman, depuis 1985, vous savez qu'il existe des profondes différences d'opinions et de visions entre les leaders de "l'establishment" dans la politique, l'entreprise privé, et moi-même.

La démocratie encourage les débats publics de tout genres et à la fin, la population devrait choisir parmi les options dans ces trois secteurs:

- a) les modalités décisionnels
- b) les idées précises
- c) le leadership du trajet entre les modalités décisionnels, les idées précises et le peuple.

While I acknowledge that there are many unorthodox ways and means of discussing and rendering decisions, there still remains an individual and collective responsibility to make the process and oneself accountable to agreed upon standards that we can all contribute to.

Environnement Canada: Service des Parcs

I acknowledge the February 25/92 letter from Canadian Parks Services. It would have been preferable had a preliminary report been made available in reference to the 10/23/91 policy public consultations on the Canadian Parks Service.

Any comments offered in the public consultations of Grosse Ile are therefore subject to modification upon the reading of the forthcoming "Response Document and CPS policy".

La cinquième objectif:

- 5) de prendre le pouvoir avec l'intention de mettre en place les modalités, les décisions, les idées et le leadership de monsieur Harold Geltman.

Pourquoi: L'habitude de se faire gouverner par une politique "d'à côté" à des limites dans son application et sa responsabilisation.

La population a un droit de savoir ce qu'on dit à huis clos à propos une candidature de leadership de monsieur Harold Geltman,

La population a un droit de savoir pourquoi "l'establishment" a tellement de difficulté de mettre les idées de Harold Geltman en place et en plus, de travailler avec lui.

C'est la valeur du leadership de l'individu qui est contesté dans chaque concept de mise en valeur.

Si on cherche à décapité un leadership parcequ'on ne croit plus au position de leadership, il faut résoudre cet différence d'opinion avant tous les autres décisions.

INTRODUCTION

J'ai voulu participer à cet consultation parceque c'est très rare qu'on a l'opportunité de mettre le concept de l'île en priorité.

Par exemple, si l'histoire aura évolué avec la station de quarantaine des immigrants établi aux Côte du sud et/ou le Côte du nord, vous n'aurez pas eu le bénéfice de mes idées à propos les îles.

Pour introduire l'importance de l'île, je vous offre ces commentaires à propos cet concept géographique, avant de parler du document de la Grosse Ile.

La planète du nom de LA TERRE est un île entouré de l'aires d'espace. Cet île de la Terre est dans une famille de 8 autres planètes qui fonctionnent comme des îles en rotation: des îles mobiles et ils sont accompagnés d'une autre famille de plusieurs îles lunaires.

Il n'y a pas longtemps, personne sur terre reconnaissaient LA TERRE comme une boule sphérique. Nos savants de noms de Galiléo, Da Vinci, Newton et Fuller ont toujours devancé la grande majorité de la population et cest le peuple qui a fallu faire les rattrapages et réparations de leurs erreurs de pensés.

Le rapetissement de la terre est une conséquence des changements technologiques dans les transports et communications qui ont produit "le village global". Vra-t-on dire "le village glob-île"?

INTRODUCTION

Il y a des îles sur l'eau, des îles sous-terre et des îles dans l'espace. Il y a des îles naturelles, artificielles, et des îles technologiques comme des plateformes d'huile. Il y a des îles qui sont à la fois visible et invisible dépendant des inondations, des climatologies et les forces de gravitation de l'île de la lune.

On voit toutes sortes de formations d'îles seulement en regardant passé les îles des nuages et c'est de cet façon que je fais les instructions compréhensive d'architecture, sans license et sans tableau noire. Ce n'est pas un secret de dire ce qu'il vous passe devant vos yeux presque tous les jours.

Interplanetary commercial: (thank you)

For the benefit of the citizens of planet earth that have been raised with sceptical and doubting reactions to anything that wasn't schoolroom taught, I am asking the interplanetary influences to demonstrate the concept of island clouds that can be so easily applied to the shape and forms of land islands.

OO : OO : OO

World-wide monitoring stations: please report your observations.

Isn't it amazing what the forces of wind-energy can do toward the movement of island-cloud ideas from people to people.

L'île de Dorval, île de la Visitation, L'île de Montréal et la centaine d'îles, qui entourent la région du Grand Montréal Métropolitain, peuvent nous donner une petite idée de la perspective de tous les îles du monde avec le nom: "LA GROSSE ÎLE".

When speaking of size what comes to mind: Australia, Greenland, Baffin, Iceland, Newfoundland and how many others that merit ranking?

Does anybody know how long it took to figure out that Australia was an island or that Greenland was an island?

Besides floating island clouds in the skies, we also have floating iceberg-islands in the waters and might there be some communicative link between these two geometric and geographic phenomena? What do you think that Harold Geltman would say in answer to this question?

"He would probably want to consult the animal world to see if there are any such animals that function as islands?

It's called comprehensivity: the art of inter-relating integrative and separative phenomena as part of a constantly changing quest for understanding.

COMPUTER INSTRUCTIONS D'ORDINATEURS (continuation * 1-21: p. 10)

- ①) inventory all novels, theatrical plays, songs, poems, movies, radio-tv documentaries, and other real and science-fiction publications relating to the concept of islands.

L'Association des îles du Monde

- a) est-ce que le Canada, le Québec y sont membre?
- b) y-a-t-il une association des îles du Canada et le Québec?
- c) quel leadership avons nous offert sur l'île de Montréal à l'association des îles du Monde ?
- d) qui était le premier explorateur à célébrer le tour de l'île de

Montréal? Jacques Cartier. le savait-il que Montréal était une île ?

EARTH DAY 1992 --EARTH SUMMIT 1992

When you live on an island, you develop different habitational and environmental customs than when you live on the mainland. Citizens of earth are still living and working and recreating as if though they live on a flat earth mainland surface 364 days of the year and upon a spherical "Glob-island" earth on one day of the year.

The approaches to island living has specific military insights that allows one to learn how to think in many languages: air, land, water, under-water. Il y a plusieurs langues d'environnements parmi les îles du monde et si nous sommes prêt à prendre le temps de comprendre les animaux des îles du monde dans leurs langage, nous aurions pas la nécessité de faire tous ces études inutiles à propos ces animaux.

The human being may well be the first species to be on its way of studying itself into extinction.

Our erroneous navigational habits have brought us so much success that we simply can not believe that we could lose it all, after we have recorded so many successes.

There is a major attitudinal confrontation taking place on earth.

ISLAND MAN versus ISLAND'S ISLAND

The first glimpse of this came about after EXPO '67 in Montréal.

Having created an artificial island site of magnificent proportions, the people and decision-makers decided to label their efforts with the following name feud:

english....	Man and his World	M & HW
french.....	Terre des Hommes	TDH

En anglais c'était: l'homme et sa terre / sa planète/ son monde

in french it was: Thé world of men/ Men and their World/

Was the difference only a nuance of grammar? Was somebody thinking of one particular individual and was there a competition of the leader's world and the rest of the group's world? Y-a-t-il eu une décapitation?

Would they be able to give the same names in 1992-1993?

The attitudinal confrontation is between these two schools of thought:

ISLAND MAN : we human beings (we the male species of adults)
built this planet exactly the way it is and therefore
we have the right to say it is our world.

ISLAND'S ISLAND: the world was built and created and given to all the humans and animals as a gift and we have destroyed the gift by building one unidimensional image of the world in the shape of adult human males at the expense of many other omitted humans , animals & environments.

With each passing day, the chasm between these two schools of thought deepens with each claiming that the other is destroying what was built and/or created.

La consultation publique sur "La Grosse Ile" nous donne cet bref opportunité de réfléchir sur nos approches d'arrivées à l'entrée de "L'Ile de la Terre".

La climatologie mondiale va vous répondre en réaction à vos pensées et vos actions de réfléchissements.

LA GROSSE ÎLE

Introduction

Tous mes commentaires s'adressent à la co-ordination des différents gouvernements: fédéral, provincial, municipal--MRC, l'entreprise privé, les individus et la clientèle.

Je ne veux pas faire de la discrimination parmi l'oublie des autres îles voisines. Je comprends bien le travail qui a déjà été aménagé dans les environs de l'arrondissement historique d'île d'Orléans, Le Réserve Nationale de Faune du Cap-Tourmente, Le Réserve de L'île-Aux-Grues et le Chenal des Grands Voiliers.

Il faut aussi dire que je suis limité dans mes commentaires de ne pas avoir visité le Sanctuaire de la Grosse Île, ni le Parc du Mont Saint-Anne et ni la ville de Montmagny.

A propos les questions d'immigration. Quelques commentaires:

- i) nous devons faire l'inventaire de tous les autres centres de quarantaine d'immigration dans le monde depuis 1832 et peut-être avant cet date.
- ii) où était l'origine de ces décisions mondiale et soyons prudents de faire les comparaisons avec nos mentalités de 1992-1993.
- iii) nous devons faire l'inventaire des abus de ces politiques quel que soit le pays de réception.
- iv) y'avait-il d'autres îles utilisé pour ces objectifs de quarantaine au Canada et dans le monde?
- v) existe-t-il des documents secrets à propos l'utilisation des politiques d'immigration, quarantaine et désinfection? ~~Si~~ oui, nous devons les rendre publique.
- vi) existe-t-il un lien entre les politiques de quarantaine-désinfection avant, durant et après 1937 et les politiques des Allemands dans la quarantaines et désinfection?
- vii) Are there any secret war documents that should be made public relating to a possible Canadian-German connection with the issuing of quarantine and disinfection policies?
- viii) Did Canada act in any advisory way in the establishing of quarantine and disinfection policies in other countries around the world? Any documents about this should be made public.
- ix) How many other names did this "Grosse Island" have and were there any nicknames amongst the users and detained?
- x) Are there any wrong-doings still taking place today associated with what took place on Grosse Island and if so, can steps be taken to make these acts publicly known and corrected with the proper remedial legislation?
- xi) All private papers relating to the Agriculture Canada animal quarantine station should be made public and I want to know if this policy and establishment since 1965 might have been used as a cover for some covert political quarantine against human beings in some other geographical area? Is there a need for a public enquiry?
- xii) What else don't I know about this whole issue and what are the obstructions preventing Harold Gidman from learning the facts?

1) LE CONTEXTE (pp 7-43)

- 1) combien d'occupation et d'habitation existe-t-il parmi les 21 îles de l'archipel de l'île-aux-Grues ?
- 2) est-ce qu'on on à l'intention de faire des îles de quarantines du SIDA en réaction similaires des quarantines du choléra?
- 3) Y-en-a-t-il d'autres, que Pierre Duplain, qui ont loué La Grosse Ile ? (1830)
- 4) Y-avait-il d'autres plans qui ont été abandonné durant l'occupation de l'île par le militaire?
- 5) A-t-on déjà écrit les relations entre la gestion de l'immigration humain, le bureau d'agriculture et la gestion des animaux ?
- 6) Y-a-t-il des biographies des surintendants médical de la Grosse Ile? (p. 79 Montizambert)
- 7) Were the medical superintendents linked to any illicit activities, blackmail, extortion and whatever, perhaps because of some war policy and/or Perhaps because their hands were tied by some unknown fact?
- 8) Were adults and children, males and females detained with the same policies and practices?
- 9) How many other ancilliary support structures such as hospitals for immigrant ship inspections and perhaps "medical kidnappings" were taking place with and/or without the approval of authorities?
- 10) Est-ce que la naissance et vie de Harold Geltman a été un expérimentation médicale sous la direction du Conseil des Recherches pour la Défense stationné dans la Grosse Ile avant et durant la deuxième guerre mondiale?
Savez-vous combien de fois j'ai demandé de tels questions et depuis quand?
- 11) Est-ce que le bureau de l'agriculture à pris la relève des expérimentations du Conseil de Recherche pour la Défense ? (verify Defense construction 1951)
- 12) Est-ce que la commission scolaire* dans les environs connaissait l'objectif de la Grosse Ile ? (les frères et les soeurs des écoles)
Qu'est-ce qu'on disait dans les écoles à propos les quarantines humains et les maladies contagieuses?
- 13) Quel était le plus grand nombre de détenus sur La Grosse Ile et avait-on utilisé d'autres îles? Le noms des navires utilisés pour transporter les détenus?
- 14) Vous devez mettre en place une code de protection contre la dégradation d'environnement en trois secteurs: a) moins de 50,000 visiteurs/an
b) 50,000-100,000 visiteurs / an et c) plus que 100,000 visiteurs/an.
Mes préférences:
i) aucun chemin pavé
ii) aucun auto ni autobus
iii) avion d'urgence seulement
- 15) Vous devez élargir l'importance et priorité de la faune des îles du monde et utiliser l'arriver-d'un parc national de l'île comme l'opportunité de faire une bonne publicité des îles du monde et leurs environnements spéciales de faune en relation avec la nature.
- 6) nous devons considérer l'accès à l'île durant toute l'année: 4 saisons.

II) BUTS ET OBJECTIFS (p.45-47)

- 1) Nous devons amplifier nos buts, objectifs et thèmes pour inclure ceci:
- 2) La raison d'être du préservation des îles au Canada comme un service mondiale
- 3) Les ingrédients spéciale des îles à propos l'environnement et la faune dans le monde entier et que cet parc national contribue à l'éducation et compréhension du phénomène de l'île.
- 4) Combien de parc nationale va-t-il y avoir au Canada dans la forme d'un île et combien d'opportunités auront nous d'avoir l'attention du public en visite dans un île où nous aurons le pouvoir éducatif-explicatif?
- 5) Il doit avoir un thème secondaire sur les stations quarantines comparatifs pour démontrer à la population comment se faisait les décisions durant ces époques.
- 6) un autre thème secondaire doit mettre de l'avant l'éducation de tous les environs de l'île et les autres côtes nord et sud de la rivière.
par exemple, y-a-t-il un musée de voitures à chevaux à Saint Vallier et pourront-ils contribuer aux recherches des rôles de chevaux et voitures à chevaux durant les années de l'île de quarantaine?
- 7) Est-ce que les gens résidents sur les côtes nord et sud du fleuve avait le temps de visiter et utiliser les îles (21) de l'archipel de L'île aux Grues. Étaient-ils employés à l'île Grosse?

III) PROBLEMATIQUE DE MISE EN VALEUR (pp49-67)

- 1) Is the use of the island for la station de quarantaine animale a 1992 fact and is this station being used as a possible covert side-way-station for something being done experimentally upon other human beings; using animals as a disguise for the study of children?
- 2) Que nous devons élaborer le statut du parc historique national pour peut-être faire un parc national-provincial conjointement avec la province de Québec. Démontrer que la co-opération sur l'île de la Terre commence avec les très petits îles de la terre.
- 3) Qui sont les membres du conseil d'administration de la Corporation pour la Mise en valeur de Brosse Ile? y-a-t-il des enfants? C'est important d'inclure les enfants au débout de nos politiques d'environnement et que les enfants soient des "partenaires actifs" avec le monde des adultes.
- 4) Nous devons interdire la construction de ponts avec l'île d'Orléans. Les politiques d'accès libre et/ou sur le contrôle doit répondre aux moyens financières des touristes dans la perspective géographique.
- 5) Utilisez-vous des ballades sur les lieux?
- 6) I bring to your attention the audio-visual and book presentation that appeared on the Donahue television programme: May 6 1992 WPTZ-5 9:00 a.m. "Easy Access to National Parks": Wendy Roth & Michel Tompane: 1-800-633-5633 Issue of equipments for disadvantaged people offered in national parks.
- 7) Qu'est-ce que c'est des "tests psychographiques". Nous ne devons pas et je répète, nous ne devons pas psychiatrisé les clients visiteurs dans les parcs et sites naturels du Canada.
- 8) Verify the attempt to commit Harold Geltman to psychiatric treatment detention hospital, February 10, March 26 1975, as an act of revenge punishment.

IV) CONCEPT DE MISE EN VALEUR (pp. 69-76)

- 1) Les attraits naturels et culturels du site doit s'accorder au attraits du concept de l'île reconnu comme "le glob-île" et c'est à vous de prendre le leadership du mondialisation de notre île de Terre avec une mise en valeur de la vie des îles.
- 2) Quand on parle d'offrir un "milieu de qualité," vous avez l'obligation de faire cet offre dans un système comparatif qui va amener le public à faire confiance à vos intentions.
- 3) Ce n'est pas une politique attirante qui va faire la qualité de la présentation. C'est l'éducation, la compréhensivité, la comparaison, et le vouloir de servir mieux qu'on est servi sans se faire tromper de fausses motivations.
- 4) To accomplish this, you require something more than good intentions, good skills, competent personnel and a good mix.
You have got to have your priorities straight in many more ways than one and then the rest can be explained.

V) EVALUATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE (pp 80-82)

Le processus fédéral d'évaluation et d'examen en matière d'environnement (PFEE) doit se préparer pour les prochaines étapes de severité dans leurs travaux avec le publique.

You have a responsibility to lead where and when others simply cannot do so. How many other countries have such environmental protection machinery? Canada must assume the leadership in this area much in the way the United Kingdom carried a great amount of the ambassadorial and consular work and representation for Canada before Canada matured in international affairs. If Canada doesn't pursue this leadership vigorously, few other countries shall make the attempt.

If ever there was a time for international imaginative leadership, the world environment awaits it.

Every instance affords a leadership opportunity and that is one of the things I am trying to illustrate.

There is only so much more that I can do from the bottom up and it becomes especially difficult when the top leadership doesn't share my spirit and enthusiasm. But even when they do, we have serious disagreements about the nature of the risks that I believe we should be taking to change the archaic policies inhibiting environmental progress.

It isn't the fault of the leadership if they don't have the enthusiasm to do what they simply don't know how to do. They have remarkable examples of competent leaderships in other areas, but the world is changing faster than their ability to comprehend and there are some very specific reasons why the situation has evolved in that manner.

History demonstrates the symptoms whenever leadership is overwhelmed by the failure to understand the complexity of the issues. The deterioration of linguistic communication is one such symptomatic behaviour that helps to locate the roots of the

Pourquoi faire une consultation sur la "Grosse Ile"?

Pourquoi est-ce que j'ai décidé de présenter un mémoire écrit avec présentation verbale?

Pourquoi est-ce que j'ai faites tellement d'intervention devant des audiences publiques?

Pourquoi est-ce qu'on dit quand il fait soleil, il fait beau?

Si la direction de la politique Suisse continue, nous allons perdre la beauté de la contribution de la neutralité dans un monde de plus en plus parti pris sur toute les grandes et petites décisions quotidiennes.

La planète a toujours besoin d'une lumière à part de tous les autres lumières; d'une étoile qui éclaire différemment que les autres; d'un oasis de compréhension dans un désert de sourdes, d'aveugles et de muettes.

La naissance et la vie des bébés et enfants sont cet lumière. Quand la jeunesse perd la compréhension des plus jeunes, ils commencent à perdre leurs dictions de communication.

Quand la jeunesse, les enfants et les bébés perdent leurs approches avec l'environnement à cause des décisions des adultes, le désert devient pire que le désert. Et je parle non seulement des déserts de sable.

Ce n'est pas trop tard le Québec. La grande majorité de la population n'ont plus la liberté de choix de choisir comme les Québécois.

JE DEMANDE AUX QUEBÉCOIS DE BRANCHER LEUR ARBRE DE CROISSANCE EN CET DIRECTION :

- a) une transition économique où ni l'employeur et ni l'employée fera aucune dégradation environnementale.
- b) une transition économique pour convertir l'entier du Québec dans un PARC MONDIALE.
- c) une transition politique pour convertir le Québec comme un île environnementale mondiale.
- d) une transition sociale pour faire au Québec une qualité de vie et plusieurs styles de vie à la plus haute standard environnementale que nous pouvions supporter.
- e) une transition culturelle d'apprendre comment vivre ensemble comme peuple du monde au delà de la dépendance étouffante.

Les quelques suggestions à propos le futur de la "Grosse Ile" à l'intention de faire le lien entre les environnements des plus petits îles et l'environnement de l'île de la Terre.

Le futur de la constitution environnementale de la Terre est aussi important que les débats constitutionnels des politiques intra-canadiens.

Le Québec à plus de sécurité dans la construction du futur de la constitution environnementale mondiale que de chercher sa place comme membre des Nations-Unies ou membre du Marché Constitutionnel du Canada. (Faisons le débat)

Il ne faut pas mettre notre environnement en quarantaine pour promouvoir l'économie.

Il ne faut pas mettre notre jeunesse en quarantaine pour promouvoir les adultes.

Il ne faut pas mettre notre futur en quarantaine pour promouvoir le passé et le présent.

J'offre au Québec le leadership environnement du monde.

J'offre au Québec un rôle de leadership unique à ses capacités.

- 1) Verify the historical timing and relevancy of the date May 20 in the history of the World.
- 2) Vérifier les noms et emplacements de plusieurs des autres îles renommées: Île du Diable, Île Alcatraz, les îles dans les environs de Détroit, les îles au nom des animaux; y-a-t-il une hiérarchie des îles?
- 3) Anticipate and intercept the built-in time frame of trying to associate Harold Geltman in a forged audio-visual demonstration instigation as a means of "banishing" him to a devil's island refuge, perhaps disguised as some other kind of island.
- 4) Verify if there are any continuing efforts to turn the island of Montreal into a senior citizen's Santa Catalina Island?
- 5) Y-a-t-il une histoire des îles du Québec et quels sont les plus reconnus des îles parmi quels populations?
- 6) Y-a-t-il d'autres îles artificiels au Québec ?
- 7) Favorise-t-on la "nomination" des lacs au dépens des îles, et si oui pourquoi?
- 8) Que sont les détails de la communauté de Grosse-Île au Îles de la Madeleine?
- 9) Verify if there is a possible built-in twin time frame with the Grosse-Île in the Îles de la Madeleine and the communities of Leslie and Old Harry as a preparatory "he'll fall flat on his face" entry set-up?
- 10) Quel relation existe-t-il entre Grosse Île, Îles de la Madeleine et La Réserve Nationale de Faune de la Pointe-De-L'est ?
- 11) Y-a-t-il un conflit et/ou compétition entre la Réserve Faunique Mastigouche et La Réserve Nationale de Faune de la Pointe de l'est?
- 12) Verify the origins of the community of Grosse Pointe, Michigan and verify if there is any link to the comings and goings of Harold Geltman?
- 13) Anticipate and verify if there is a built-in "burn Harold Geltman time frame" linked to his relationship with his best ideas and perhaps some of the women that contributed toward his potential success.
- 14) Is the question of islands as controversial as the colour of women's hair: blonde, brunette, black, red, auburn, sand and all the other colours that hairdresser's seem to know about and if so, why is so much attention paid to so few islands when there are so many un-occupied islands?
- 15) Anticipate and verify the attempt to punish Harold Geltman by means of the enactment of the phrase "no man is an island unto himself", particularly for his refusal to have "settled down with a married woman household" lifestyle.
- 16) Vérifier s'il y a une relation entre les questions de La Grosse Île et L'île des Soeurs et la rue Island à Montréal.
- 17) Are there any "high definition technological" invisible quarantines being administrated against Harold Geltman for whatever the reasons?
- 18) Who controls the access paths of people allowed to come into contact with Harold Geltman amongst those designated "not of Harold Geltman's kind" whatever that means to the users.
- 19) Does the office of the Presidency of the United States and the office of the Prime Minister of Canada own any islands?
- 20) How many foreign - owned islands are there in Canada and the United States?
- 21) Is there an island named World Island?

Harold Geltman

IRISH CANADIAN AID & CULTURAL SOCIETY OF TORONTO



IRISH CANADIAN CENTRE

Irish Canadian Aid & Cultural Society of Toronto

1650 Dupont St., Toronto, Ontario M6P 3T2 • Telephone 762-2858

May 20, 1992

Rt. Hon. John Charest
Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

I am writing, on behalf of the Irish Canadian Aid and Cultural Society of Toronto with respect to the Development Concept for the future Grosse-Ile National Historic Park.

The Irish Canadian Aid and Cultural Society is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year as an organization dedicated to immigrant aid, benevolence, and cultural activities. It is not surprising, therefore, that we were most interested to learn, recently, that Grosse Ile is closer to becoming a national historic park. We do, however, wish to express regret that we have never received information about public hearings or other means of providing input to the project. We would, therefore, request that the Irish Canadian Aid and Cultural Society be regularly informed about your plans for Grosse Ile. Any effort on your part to ensure that our organization is added to the mailing list in this regard, would be appreciated.

The Executive Committee of the Society was given to understand, during the past week, that May 20, 1992 is a deadline by which responses to the Development Concept must be submitted. In light of the obvious time restrictions, we are unable to draft a considered response in time to meet this deadline. Our Society attaches much significance to the whole matter of Grosse Ile and its role in Canadian history and, given this, we are disappointed that we are unable to comment more fully on the proposals at this time.

The Irish Canadian Aid and Cultural Society hereby requests that the Ministry of Environment (Parks Service) advise us on both the procedure and status of the planning process for the Grosse Ile development. We further request that your Ministry conduct additional hearings outside the Province of Quebec. It is our view that this is appropriate in regard to the vast numbers of Canadians of Irish ancestry throughout Canada and the national historical significance of Grosse Ile.



IRISH CANADIAN CENTRE

Irish Canadian Aid & Cultural Society of Toronto

1650 Dupont St., Toronto, Ontario M6P 3T2 • Telephone 762-2858

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Our organization commends the Ministry of Environment for acknowledging the special role Grosse Ile played in the history of Canada as a nation of immigrants. We urge the Canadian government to pursue its development of Grosse Ile with the utmost sensitivity to its present status as a sacred burying ground. We urge that all effort be made to interpret the history of Grosse Ile with the passion and honesty which is sometimes lost in detached academic histories. We are confident that a balance can be struck between the development of this rich national heritage resource and its dignified preservation as a burying ground.

The Irish Canadian Aid and Cultural Society looks forward to your response and welcomes the opportunity of participating in the public consultation process required for bringing a Grosse Iles concept to fruition.

Sincerely,

IRISH CANADIAN AID AND CULTURAL SOCIETY OF TORONTO

for. J.M. Raftery
Patricia McDonnell,
President

c.c: Patricia Ruane, Secretary
John Raftery, Chairman - Board of Governors

AMR/a

IRISH FREEDOM ASSOCIATION CUMANN SAOIRSE NA hEIREANN

IRISH FREEDOM ASSOCIATION CUMANN SAOIRSE na hEIREANN

Box 171, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L5

Brief to Parks Service, Environment Canada, regarding proposals for Development of Grosse Ile as a National Historic Site

It is the opinion of the Irish Freedom Association/Cumann Saoirse na hEireann, Toronto, having read the Development Concept distributed by Environment Canada, that the proposals are flawed and in need of correction and clarification.

Our first objection is to the misrepresentation of the historical record in the footnote to the first page of the chapter headed "Historic Significance", which reads, "Vast numbers of Irish had left their country since the 1820s to escape overpopulation, repeated food shortages, the re-allocation of land by the landlords, and, from 1845, the Great Potato Famine." In fact, as a reading of the reliable historical accounts (e.g. Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger*; Donald MacKay, *Flight From Famine*; P. S. O'Hegarty, *History of Ireland under the Union*; J. J. Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society*) indicates, Ireland was not overpopulated in absolute terms: that is, its agricultural economy produced food in plenty to feed its entire pre-Famine population of over 8 million people. "Food shortages" and "reallocation of land" are euphemisms for the social and economic structures of class and national struggle in Ireland, between the indigenous Irish population and the colonial occupation forces of England. The Irish emigrated in vast numbers, not because of impersonal economic forces, as the Development Concept implies, but as a result of the deliberate policy choices of the British colonial power and its implanted Ascendancy agents in Ireland. That policy, above all else, sought to clear the land of Ireland of its people - as had already occurred in the Scottish Highlands - and to maintain Ireland a source of profits for the British landed aristocracy.

The most frightful implementation of this policy was the so-called Famine. In Irish, the dreadful months of 1846-48 are still called *An Gorta Mór*, the Great Hunger, because the starvation was entirely man-made. During the three years when the Irish population was reduced by some 2,500,000, by starvation, disease and emigration, Ireland exported more food than arrived as "relief supplies". Those food exports, cash crops designated entirely to pay rents to Ireland's colonial absentee landlords, would have more than sufficed to feed all those who disappeared. In short, the simple truth is that the Great Hunger was an artificial famine, a form of economic genocide - about which, it must be said, English opinion makers like *The Times* of London, and English political leaders, gloated with unbecoming and inhuman enthusiasm.

The mass deportation of the Irish in the late 1840s was a monstrous crime. The victims of that crime include those buried in mass graves - some marked and others unknown to this day - on Grosse Ile. Their presence is commemorated by the Celtic Cross erected on Telegraph Hill by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1909, and by the earlier monument erected by Dr. Douglas. The plans for the development of the National Historic Site, however, do not indicate any similar commitment to their memory on the part of the Parks Service. The fact that their deaths occurred 145 years ago does not, in any way, mitigate either the horror of the fact or the guilt of those who were responsible.

To do anything less than to commemorate the victims of English colonial misrule in the appropriate manner, that is, with the highest profile possible, commensurate with the recognition of the other aspects of Grosse Ile's history, would be to become a collaborator and an accessory, after the fact, in the mass murder to which those graves testify. We cannot believe that the Canadian Government, Environment Canada and its Parks Service, and the historians and archaeologists working on this project, wish to shoulder this guilt.

Finally, therefore, we add our voice to those who urge the Parks Service of Environment Canada to undertake

- 1.** to correct the misrepresentation in the historical account offered as a background to the proposal and
- 2.** to reassure the Canadian Irish community that the mass graves of the victims of the British colonial misrule will be properly acknowledged and fully incorporated as a central and essential part of the National Historic Site on Grosse Ile.

MASSON, MAURICE

MÉMOIRE

Présenté
à
Environnement Canada
Service des Parcs

pour
le
Concept de Mise en Valeur
de
La Grosse Île
Lieu Historique National

par
Maurice Masson

Audiences Publiques
Montréal
le 20 mai 1992

Mon nom est Maurice Masson, et c'est à titre personnel et comme simple citoyen que je présente ce mémoire.

Mais, étant de la lignée des Masson qui ont oeuvré durant 117 ans sur la *GROSSE ÎLE*, c'est un peu aussi en leur nom et au nom des autres travailleurs de l'*Île*, que je me présente.

Car même si géographiquement, je n'étais pas directement impliqué dans l'avenir de la *GROSSE ÎLE*, j'en ai tellement entendu parler par mes parents, que c'est comme si j'y étais né moi-même, sur cette *Île* ; aussi, j'ai endossé leur cause: j'ai partagé leurs craintes et leurs espoirs face à l'avenir de l'*ÎLE*, notre *GROSSE ÎLE*.

Heureusement, avec la création d'un *Parc National*, ces craintes ou inquiétudes se sont dissipées. La *GROSSE-ÎLE* sera sauvée dans sa valeur historique et culturelle.

Merci donc à Environnement Canada, Service Canadien des Parcs, pour ce "sauvetage" et merci aussi pour ces audiences qui me permettent de m'exprimer ici.

Mon intervention se présentera en 4 propositions:

Appui

Ma première proposition en est une d'appui au Service des Parcs d'Environnement Canada pour son projet.

Je tiens donc à affirmer mon approbation et mon encouragement à continuer selon les les grandes lignes des orientations proposées.

Je veux même en profiter pour féliciter toute l'équipe qui a mis de l'avant le "*Concept de Mise en Valeur*", qui semble avoir bien compris que la *GROSSE-ÎLE* fut, est encore et doit toujours demeurer "*un lieu de paix qu'on doit respecter*".

Amendements ou ajouts:

Ma deuxième proposition en serait une d'amendements ou d'ajouts.

Je verrais le thème secondaire suivant:

"La station de quarantaine de la Grosse Île (1832-1937)"

présenté plutôt de la façon suivante:

"GROSSE ÎLE: Quarantaine (1832-1937) et

Village insulaire au tournant du siècle"

Il est vrai que la raison première d'existence de la *GROSSE ÎLE* fut la quarantaine. Il est vrai aussi que la *GROSSE ÎLE* fut célèbre par son accueil aux immigrants, dont plusieurs mourants, mais elle fut aussi un village de travailleurs insulaires bien portants.

Il faudrait, à mon avis, développer cet aspect.

Si on voyage le moins en touriste, on constate qu'en plusieurs pays, et même chez-nous, on construit de toute pièce des villages-types (parfois-même fictifs) de certaines époques, on constate alors que cela répond à un besoin, à une curiosité intellectuelle d'un très grand nombre de touristes.

Et bien, quand on songe qu'on a sur la *GROSSE ÎLE* tout un village authentique, assez bien conservé, directement sorti du siècle dernier... Quelle chance exceptionnelle! Et surtout, quelle richesse culturelle complémentaire à l'aspect historique de l'immigration.

Il faudrait faire connaître le mode de vie de cette époque, ou du moins certains aspects typiques, ex.: il y avait sur l'île 2 catégories de travailleurs: les saisonniers (réguliers d'une saison à l'autre) et les permanents qui y passaient l'hiver; chez ces derniers, il y avait une certaine relève de père en fils. L'île fut un village au sens civique du terme, où des gens sont nés, ont vécu, se sont mariés, ont élevé leur famille, ... et, finalement, y sont inhumés.

Ce village fut aussi très avant-gardiste, sur certains points, pour son époque, ex.: électricité dans les maisons et éclairage de rue, téléphone, eau courante, eau chaude, toilette à l'eau ...

J'insiste pour présenter un village "vivant" et non un village fantôme.

Les 2 chapelles devraient rester ouvertes et fonctionnelles, avec service du culte et ne devraient pas être transformées en musées (placardées de photos ou de tableaux, remplies d'artéfacts ...).

Le presbytère devrait être restauré et occupé par les ministres du culte (ou autres employés) et par un centre d'archives, de documentation et de présentation de photos, ou autres pièces, ... présentant des faits de l'aspect religieux de l'époque.

Il faudrait aussi faire revivre l'école pour présenter aux visiteurs cet aspect important, voire même vital, pour un village d'insulaires de l'époque. Cet endroit pourrait contenir les témoignages des aspects culturels et du quotidien du village.

Point de vue information générale et spécifiquement vocation de quarantaine, je trouve très bien le projet de centraliser dans l'hôtel de 3e classe. Mais à l'époque aussi, les résidents étaient mêlés à la vie de la quarantaine, il est normal que le visiteur de la quarantaine se mêle aussi à la vie des résidents de l'époque.

Il faut aussi soutenir l'intérêt des visiteurs sur l'Île, par différents postes d'information, jusqu'à l'autre extrémité de l'Île, jusqu'au cimetière d'en bas.

Le quai d'en bas et la boulangerie étaient le centre de la vie quotidienne des insulaires. Il faut faire renaître ce quartier. Il faut reconstruire cette boulangerie pour que les visiteurs la fréquentent, comme le faisaient les insulaires. Il faut y replacer un canot, moyen de transport quatre saisons des résidents, et l'ambulance, moyen de transport des malades (les 2 transports en vedette sur l'Île).

Il faudrait aussi permettre à des canotiers de s'y entraîner ou de faire des démonstrations de ce moyen de transport typique des insulaires de l'archipel de l'Île aux Grues. Cette discipline a été perpétuée par le Carnaval de Québec, mais les insulaires en ont toujours les droits d'auteur!

Il faut que les visiteurs soient sensibilisés à cet aspect "village d'insulaires" de l'époque. Il faut aussi qu'on affiche les noms des travailleurs de la quarantaine, gens valeureux, qui ont permis la réussite de la quarantaine et la réputation de l'Île. Ils sont nombreux, et je ne les connais pas tous, mais j'en ai bien entendu parler et surtout, parler en bien.

De ceux-ci, je connais assez bien les Masson, que je peux vous citer à titre d'exemple, et qui, à eux seuls, ont eu 17 employés de la quarantaine, 40 enfants nés sur l'île, 67 qui y ont vécu, 7 qui s'y sont mariés et 8 qui y sont inhumés. Je connais aussi les Vekeman, qui moins nombreux, sont quand même bien représentés par Jeannette, ma mère, qui en a sensibilisé plus d'un par son témoignage touchant, soit son livre "Grand-Maman raconte la Grosse-Île; elle mérite sûrement une place d'honneur parmi les grands bâtisseurs l'Île comme *Parc National*.

Prévention

Ma 3e proposition en est une de prévention.

Vous y avez sûrement déjà pensé, mais je tiens à ce que ce soit une priorité.

Les bâtiments actuels sont toute la richesse de l'Île. Mais, en cendre, ils ne vaudraient plus grand chose. Il faut un service de prévention et de lutte aux incendies très adéquat, plus que "selon les normes" (paratonnerres, citernes, extincteurs, gicleurs, alarmes, ...)

Il faut limiter le nombre de visiteurs et les contrôler efficacement, spécialement si vous acceptez des "visiteurs libres" (attention!).

Il y a aussi la végétation, et toute une belle forêt d'origine conservée intacte; il ne faut pas oublier la possibilité de feu de forêt.

Le ministère devrait s'engager aussi à reconstruire tout édifice qui serait endommagé ou détruit.

Il faudrait aussi éviter de déformer l'aspect de l'Île par des installations ou des infra-structures trop encombrantes et discordantes (ex.: terrain de camping, grande marina, etc) Un trop grand nombre de visiteurs masquerait également les lieux et troublerait l'ambiance des visites (sauf pour gros groupes spéciaux, de pèlerins, par exemple).

Tous les transporteurs devront être agréés par un organisme compétent et officiel, de même que les plaisanciers, qui eux en plus devraient être limités. Il faut à tout prix éviter la visite des fêtards bruyants qui perturberaient les visites normales et nuiraient aux transporteurs professionnels.

Pour une suite logique

J'intitulerais ma dernière proposition comme suit: pour une suite logique...

Il faudrait également permettre aux insulaires de l'archipel et aux descendants des résidents de la *GROSSE ÎLE* de s'impliquer dans un "suivi" des orientations du futur *Parc National* et leur donner également la priorité d'emploi, pour une suite logique et une continuité de l'histoire de la *GROSSE ÎLE*.

Conclusion

Je conclus en réitérant mes félicitations et mes remerciements à Environnement Canada, Service des Parcs, pour l'orientation du futur *Parc National*.

Et je termine également en souhaitant que ce futur *Parc National de la Grosse Île* ne prenne pas l'allure d'un musée statique de l'histoire de l'immigration, mais qu'il ait toujours l'âme du village insulaire vivant, actif, par où passait l'immigration.

Maurice Masson

Maurice Masson

McGILL IRISH SOCIETY

McGill Irish Society

Submission to Environment Canada
on the subject of:

Grosse Isle National Historical Site

Presented orally:

May 20, 1992

Guy Favreau Complex Conference Centre
200 René-Levesque Boulevard West
Montréal, Québec

The McGill Irish Society would like to thank Environment Canada for the opportunity to present its concerns with regards to the proposed Grosse Isle National Historic Site.

It is entirely appropriate that the Parks Service branch of Environment Canada should hear from the Irish community with regards to the subject of immigration and the proposed National Historic Site at Grosse Isle. Perhaps no other people on earth can give more expert testimony on the tragedy and hope that emigration represents than the Irish. As a people we have experienced emigration for hundreds of years; the emigrant's story runs deep through our history; it can be found in our songs, in our poetry, and in our stories. No Irish family has remained untouched by emigration. It is a story that all Irish Canadians can tell only too well.

To understand the impact of emigration on the Irish people one only has to consider Ireland's population levels over the past one hundred and fifty years. In the early nineteenth century Ireland had a population of over eight million people, just four million less than Britain. Today, Ireland's population, north and south, stands at roughly five million. No other European nation can point to such a population decline over the past century and a half. Ireland's greatest export historically has been its people; the same remains true today. The cities and towns of Britain, Australia, the United States, and Canada have all become home for millions of Irish.

While the Irish emigrant of the 1840s would not recognize the Canada of today, he or she would recognize the forces motivating Irish emigrants of this century and the emotions they experienced. All emigrants experience the sadness of leaving behind friends and family in the old country. The decision to leave, whether in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, often arose because of similar forces: British mis-administration or an economic system indifferent to human suffering. Finally, all emigrants share in the hope and dream of a better life in a new land.

When I was eleven years old, my family left an Ireland of soldiers, armored cars, discrimination, and bigotry in the hope of finding a better life in Canada. I have met other young Irish men and women in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal with similar stories to tell. It is this shared experience which serves to unite Irish-Canadians today. That shared experience also unites us with those countless thousands of Irish who crossed the Atlantic from Ireland decades ago. This common emigrant experience helps explain why Grosse Isle holds a sacred place in the consciousness of all Irish-Canadians.

For Irish-Canadians, Grosse Isle is not simply a picturesque island resting in the middle of the St. Lawrence to be exploited for tourist dollars. For us, Grosse Isle is the site of an Irish tragedy of immense proportions. We believe that the story of Grosse Isle must be told and told

again to ensure that such a tragedy as befell the Irish there in 1847 never happens again. The heroism of Canadians; French and English, Catholic and Protestant, and the strength and commitment of those Irish emigrants who survived can serve as an inspiration for us all.

The Irish famine of the 1840s was the inevitable consequence of decades of British policy in Ireland, a rapacious landlord class and the operation of laissez-faire economic policies. While a million Irish starved to death, as many as two million others fled the island. 1847 marked the height of the famine as the potato crop failed completely in that year. The number of Irish seeking escape from their troubled homeland in 1847 was further increased by unscrupulous landlords determined to clear their property of poor tenants through cheap inducements to emigrate rather than pay them the more costly poor relief. Tens of thousands of Irish made their way to British North America in 1847.

The journey itself cost thousands of Irish their lives in what came to be known as the "coffin ships". In April, Stephen de Vere, a prosperous gentleman from County Limerick, took a journey on one of the ships to witness the sufferings of the emigrants. The report of his journey makes for harrowing reading. "Before the emigrant has been a week at sea", de Vere wrote, "he is an altered man... How can it be otherwise? Hundreds of poor people, men, women and children, of all ages from the driveling idiot of 90 to the babe just born, huddled together, without light, without air, wallowing in filth, and breathing a fetid atmosphere, sick in body, dispirited in heart... the fevered patients lying between the sound in sleeping places so narrow, as almost to deny them... a change of position... by their agonized ravings disturbing those around them... living without food or medicine except as administered by the hand of casual charity, dying without spiritual consolation and buried in the deep without the rites of the church". It is estimated that in 1847 alone 17,000 Irish men, women, and children died on the journey to British North America and were buried at sea.

The fate of those who actually survived the journey to Canada was often times not much better. Grosse Isle was to be the final resting place for thousands of Irish emigrants. The island had been chosen as a quarantine station for the colony of Canada in 1832 when the imperial government became alarmed by the cholera epidemic then sweeping Europe. The island was to serve as a place where sick emigrants could be cared for while the rest of the colony was spared the ravages of disease. Despite considerable notice of the scale of the disaster in Ireland in 1847, the British authorities failed to make provisions at Grosse Isle for the increased number of emigrants expected. The doctors on Grosse Isle soon realized with horror, however, that they could not possibly handle the thousands of sick that would be dumped on their shores over the Summer months. The quarantine hospital, built for 150 cases, could not hold more than 200.

The first ship to reach the island in May of 1847 had 84 cases of fever with a further 25 certain to sicken. Four days after the arrival of the first ship, eight other ships reached the island with 450 fever cases. In the months to come, the doctors would have the impossible task of caring for thousands of desperately ill Irish emigrants.

The state of the emigrants as they landed was terrible. Witnesses spoke of how passengers "tottered" on shore at Grosse Isle, "spectre-like" "wretches, "emaciated", "cadaverous", "feeble". The 7 lbs of provisions per week for each passenger on the voyage "could never have been expected to be enough to sustain an adult through the voyage", reported the Senate Committee of the United States on Sickness and Mortality in Emigrant Ships. These poor, starving, exhausted, and ill emigrants did not even have the "luxury" of a dock or pier to leave their ships upon arrival at Grosse Isle. Until the end of Summer, people had to clamber down steps or ladders off the ships onto lighters, or rowboats to be brought ashore.

When ashore the sick were taken care of by a valiant medical staff numbering under twenty. With few supplies and little equipment the doctors labored long and hard under extremely difficult conditions. Four doctors would die themselves of typhus. However, the medical men along with the priests and nuns who came to the aid of the Irish were simply overwhelmed by the disaster.

A conservative estimate holds that 20,000 Irish emigrants died in British North America on top of the 17,000 who died on route in 1847. On a memorial situated on the site of the emigrant cemetery on Grosse Isle the inscription reads:

In this secluded spot lie the mortal remains
of 5,294 persons, who, flying from pestilence
and famine in Ireland in the year 1847,
found in America but a grave.

The true number of those who died on Grosse Isle is probably much greater. A further 14,706 Irish men, women, and children would eventually perish in Quebec, Montreal, Kingston and Toronto. 1,120 others died in the province of New Brunswick while over 25,000 Irish would spend at least some time in Canadian hospitals in 1847.

When one considers the magnitude of the disaster that befell the Irish people in the year 1847 it is not surprising that Irish men and women feel a special bond to the island of Grosse Isle. In 1909 the Ancient Order of Hibernians erected a magnificent forty-foot granite Celtic Cross on the highest point of the island. Since that time Irish people from around the world have made regular journeys to the island to remember the terrible events of 1847.

We were greatly dismayed, therefore, to discover that the proposal for a National Historic Park on Grosse Isle

ignores the importance of the island to Irish-Canadians. The Celtic Cross erected by the Hibernians in 1909 is completely ignored in the development proposal despite the fact that it was the favorite destination for tourists while the island was administered by the Montmagny Corporation. The brochure currently promoting the island - Grosse Isle: Lieu historique national/National Historic Site - does not make a single reference to the Irish! In fact, it is obvious from the development proposal itself that Environment Canada wishes to downplay the tragedy that befell the Irish on Grosse Isle.

This is simply unacceptable for our group and the Irish community in general. Such a cavalier dismissal of the importance of the island to the Irish-Canadian community is an insult to all of those who died in 1847. It is also an insult to the millions of Canadians who are of Irish descent.

We, therefore, recommend that Environment Canada scrap the current proposal and develop an alternative that stresses the importance of the site to the Irish and their experience in Canada. Such a proposal cannot be criticized on economic terms when one considers the potential tourist market of nearly forty five million North Americans claiming Irish descent. The park would certainly commemorate a sad event in Canadian history. However, it would also celebrate the resilience of a people that would overcome such adversity to go on and play a crucial role in the building of Quebec and Canada. The heroism of those men and women who went to the aid of the Irish emigrants would also be properly recognized by a park commemorating the tragic events of 1847.

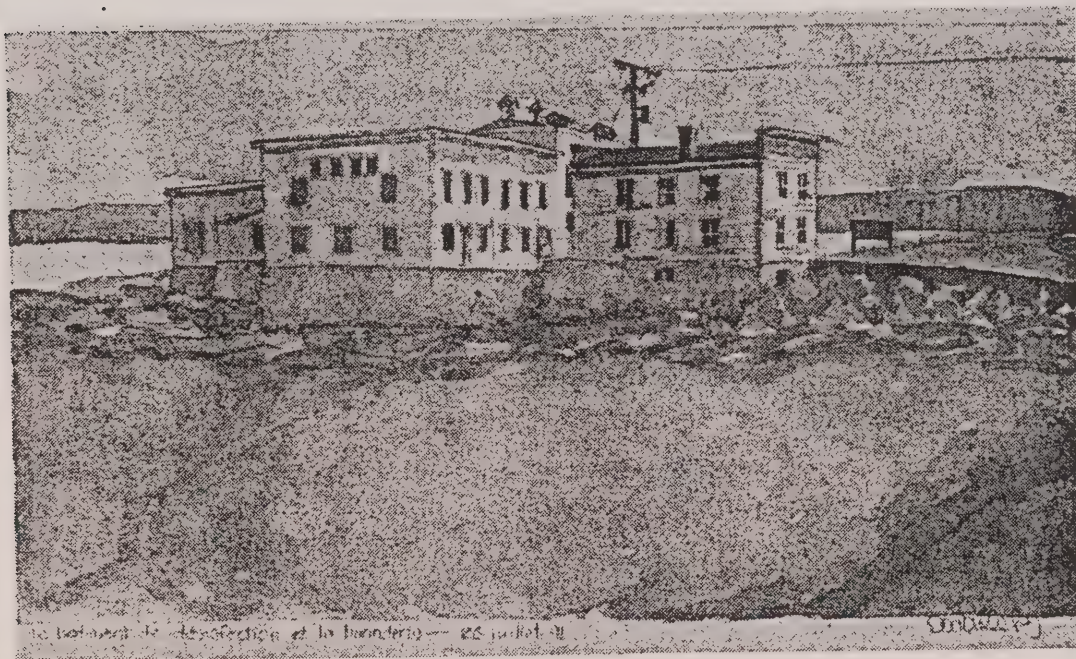
We also request that Environment Canada commit itself to a full public consultation process. The Park proposal is of considerable interest to Irish communities across Canada. Canadians of Irish background deserve the fullest consultation possible on any development of Grosse Isle. Public hearings on the proposal should, therefore, not be limited to Montreal.

In conclusion, the island of Grosse Isle holds a special place in the consciousness of Irish people throughout the world. As Irish-Canadians we feel a particular duty to ensure that the memory of those Irish who ended their sorrowful pilgrimage on the island and that of those brave people who risked everything in coming to their rescue is never erased. We are deeply concerned that the current development proposal of Environment Canada for Grosse Isle blatantly attempts to rewrite the history of the island with the Irish left out. We join with Montreal's Irish community in demanding a complete revision of the proposal to more accurately represent the meaning of Grosse Isle in Canadian and Irish history.

ROY, ISABELLE

Grosse Île et la commémoration de l'histoire.

Mémoire présenté au Service des Parcs d'Environnement Canada, dans le cadre de la consultation publique sur la mise en valeur du Lieu Historique National de la Grosse Île.



Préparé par Isabelle Roy, B. Arch.

le 20 mai 1992

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Introduction.

Grosse Île est pour moi d'un intérêt particulier puisque pour le projet de fin d'études de mon baccalauréat en architecture à l'Université McGill, j'ai travaillé à l'élaboration d'un projet fictif que j'ai appelé "Le Parc Commémoratif de Grosse Île". En plusieurs points, celui-ci se rapproche des intentions exprimées par le Service des Parcs, puisqu'il consiste en l'aménagement d'un parc voué à la commémoration de l'histoire du site enchanteur qu'est Grosse Île. Cependant, dû au temps alloué pour le développement architectural du projet, (quatre mois), j'ai dû me résoudre à passer outre plusieurs contraintes techniques importantes telles les coûts et les fonctions d'Agriculture Canada sur Grosse Île. Je n'ai donc pas l'intention de prétendre tout connaître sur Grosse Île, mais ayant mis tout mon coeur dans ce projet depuis près d'un an, j'aimerais partager avec vous quelques réflexions en rapport avec ce lieu et son histoire.

À partir de juillet de l'an dernier, j'ai étudié Grosse Île, son histoire et celle des événements dont elle fut témoin. J'ai analysé différents sites ou projets que je pouvais considérer comme précédents, à cause du désir de commémorer des événements historiques et souvent tragiques: par exemple, Ellis Island à New York, des cimetières de guerre et des monuments. J'ai ensuite exprimé mes intentions par écrit, à travers l'élaboration d'un programme et d'objectifs.

Par la suite, j'ai tenté de synthétiser mes impressions et connaissances par la réalisation architecturale de mon projet. Mon but était alors de définir quels moyens architecturaux, très souvent subtils, pourraient appuyer et même enrichir la commémoration historique d'un tel site. Ma perspective était, tout au long du projet et à ce jour, très personnelle. Mes impressions de Grosse Île, ma perception de son paysage magnifique et ma compréhension de son histoire m'ont amenée à suggérer des images poétiques pouvant inspirer les aménagements physiques.

C'est donc dans cette optique que j'aimerais vous communiquer mes réflexions.

Le site et son histoire.

Lorsqu'on observe Grosse Île, on remarque que ses bâtiments apparaissent comme des points structurés sur un vaste fond irrégulier et naturel. Ceux-ci se font discrets dans leur rapport avec le site: leur simplicité honore le paysage de Grosse Île en le laissant exprimer toute sa splendeur. La communication entre le bâti et le naturel se manifeste aussi à travers des perspectives qui les relient. Très souvent, de l'intérieur d'un édifice, les carreaux d'une fenêtre encadrent le paysage au loin comme un tableau. Ce décor naturel de l'île, les boisés riches qui couvrent le sol, les marécages, les rochers dont les teintes hésitent du gris au brun teinté de pourpre et le fleuve qui l'étreint, a un pouvoir de suggestion considérable qui ne demande qu'à être mis en valeur.

Bien sûr, l'histoire de la station de quarantaine se révèle comme l'instrument principal de l'effort de commémoration sur Grosse Île. Cependant, ce thème ne peut être traité seul; la fonction sanitaire attribuée à Grosse Île tout au long de son histoire devrait inspirer des aménagements symboliques, destinés à rappeler au visiteur l'importance de la recherche de salubrité aux dix-neuvième et début du vingtième siècles. Par exemple, l'aménagement d'un bassin ou d'une chute d'eau près de l'édifice de désinfection et dont le bruit serait audible dans la salle des douches, amènerait le visiteur à deviner le sentiment qui a dû envahir l'immigrant lors de son arrivée dans cette même salle près d'un siècle plus tôt.

La création d'un sentier historique.

Une des questions cruciales relativement au rappel de l'histoire concerne la forme que celui-ci devrait prendre. Je crois que la création d'un sentier historique reliant les structures de la partie ouest de l'île en suggère la réponse, du moins en partie. Ce sentier historique permettrait au visiteur d'admirer le paysage de Grosse Île, tout en se familiarisant avec son histoire. Le long de ce sentier, deux séquences de panneaux descriptifs pourraient relater en parallèle l'histoire de l'immigration au Canada et de Grosse Île, ainsi que celle des structures physiques, leur usage et leur relation avec l'histoire. Des images ou des objets présentés en vitrine et reliés à l'histoire racontée pourraient compléter le texte des panneaux.

Il serait aussi intéressant que le panneau destiné à décrire une structure spécifique soit situé un peu à l'avant de celle-ci et soit muni d'une ouverture permettant d'encadrer une perspective de la structure approchée.

L'histoire rapportée pourrait être divisée en six phases distinctes:

- L'immigration au Canada avant 1832 et les événements menant au choix de Grosse Île en tant que station de quarantaine.
- Les premières années: l'organisation de la station et les épidémies de choléra.
- Les causes de l'immigration massive de 1847-48: la famine en Irlande, les piètres conditions de traversée des immigrants.
- Les années noires de 1847-48 sur Grosse Île: le typhus. Les conséquences de la tragédie: l'adoption des orphelins.
- La réorganisation de la station, les découvertes médicales et la routine des habitants de Grosse Île.
- La fermeture de la station, les nouvelles fonctions attribuées à Grosse Île et la commémoration des événements passés.

L'importance d'aménager des espaces de réflexion.

Le sentier historique pourrait suivre une séquence à travers les structures se rapportant aux événements racontés et se terminer près de la rive de la Baie du Choléra, procurant au visiteur un endroit paisible où il pourra méditer sur sa perception des événements qu'il vient de découvrir.

Ces espaces de réflexion sont selon moi un élément essentiel dans la réalisation d'un parc qui se veut commémoratif comme celui du Lieu Historique National de la Grosse Île, et on devrait en retrouver à différents endroits sur le site. Leur aménagement physique devrait être lié de façon claire au site naturel de l'île, tirant parti du pouvoir contemplatif que le paysage génère. Des endroits de réflexion pourraient par exemple prendre la forme de petites alcoves bordées de murs sur les côtés qui encadrent une vue vers le paysage au loin.

Lors d'une visite sur Grosse Île en juillet dernier, j'ai été impressionnée par le charme de plusieurs endroits spécifiques: la Baie du Choléra, les rives près de la Batterie de Canons, ainsi que les rochers et marécages situés à la pointe est de l'île, près du lazaret. Je crois qu'il serait désirable, avec l'aménagement de passerelles d'une façon minimale pour ne pas déranger la beauté des lieux, de les rendre accessibles aux visiteurs. De plus, il serait possible d'aménager une passerelle sur les rochers de la rive nord de la Baie du Choléra, permettant au visiteur d'apprécier la présence du fleuve.

L'aménagement des cimetières et d'un mémorial.

Un autre point important relativement au rappel historique concerne la commémoration des événements tragiques qui ont jeté désolation et douleur sur Grosse Île. On sait que quelques monuments honorent déjà la mémoire des milliers de gens ayant vécu ces événements. Mais il y a surtout, à différents endroits dans le sol de Grosse Île, plusieurs cimetières dont l'aménagement devrait faire l'objet d'études minutieuses.

Le réaménagement du Cimetière des Irlandais de la partie ouest de l'île pourrait dégager des références symboliques à l'histoire. Par exemple, les croix blanches pourraient porter des inscriptions en rapport avec l'histoire de l'Irlande. Ou bien, on pourrait dédier ces croix aux survivants de la tragédie, les orphelins qui furent adoptés par les familles canadiennes des régions de Montmagny, Québec, Montréal ou ailleurs. Un symbole d'espoir serait ainsi créé, honorant les rescapés du drame de 1847.

La création d'un mémorial dédié à l'immigration serait un moyen d'exprimer notre sensibilité envers les événements malheureux qu'a connus Grosse Île et leur signification pour les gens qui y ont vécu pour quelques jours ou plusieurs années. Ce mémorial serait une synthèse de l'histoire de Grosse Île en rapport avec l'immigration au Canada, suggérant l'importance des réalisations comme des périodes douloureuses, tout en apportant un fort symbole d'espoir pour le futur.

Lorsqu'on étudie des mémoriaux funéraires, on se rend compte qu'une idée à la base de leur conception est de créer une surface de mur assez grande pour recevoir les noms des personnes décédées. Dans le cas des gens ayant trouvé la mort sur Grosse Île, on ne connaît ni leurs noms, ni leur nombre. On sait par contre qu'ils ont fui leur pays dans l'espoir de trouver un monde meilleur de l'autre côté de l'océan. On sait aussi qu'ils ont souffert de la séparation avec leur terre natale et que plusieurs n'ont pu trouver la paix ailleurs que dans le sol de Grosse Île.

Ces concepts pourraient être approfondis pour la création d'un mémorial. Tirer avantage de l'idée d'attachement à la terre en utilisant les rochers de Grosse Île pour la construction du mémorial, ou bien de situer le mémorial dans la paroi rocheuse près du Cimetière des Irlandais derrière la Colline du Télégraphe seraient par exemple, deux façons d'explorer ces idées.

Afin d'exprimer l'étendue des anciens hôpitaux près du lazaret à l'est de l'île, on pourrait marquer leurs empreintes par un contour au sol ou par une construction abstraite qui en démontrerait le volume.

Grosse Île, au coeur du Saint-Laurent.

L'insularité du site est aussi un concept qui devra être exploré. On pense entre autres au voyage en bateau que cet état implique. Alors, une question essentielle concerne l'arrivée sur l'île: est-il possible d'établir un parallèle entre le voyage des immigrants vers une terre nouvelle et celui des visiteurs vers Grosse Île? Peut-être pourrait-on explorer la fragilité du lien qui relie Grosse Île à la terre ferme et le rendre encore plus significatif à l'arrivée, sur le quai. On pourrait de plus aménager des structures marquant l'entrée de l'île, qui pourraient être conçues comme métaphores du voyage et aider à l'orientation du visiteur.

L'Édifce de Désinfection.

Établir le bâtiment d'accueil pour les visiteurs dans l'Édifce de Désinfection est selon moi un choix justifié puisque ce bâtiment était, à l'époque de la station de quarantaine, le premier contact des immigrants avec leur terre d'accueil. Ce bâtiment, par les fonctions qui lui furent attribuées après la fermeture de la station, amène la question de la fonction sanitaire de Grosse Île. Le traitement au formaldéhyde de l'édifice il y a quelques mois est en quelque sorte un simulacre de l'histoire, en ce sens que le bâtiment eut à passer une période de quarantaine avant de pouvoir être accessible au public. Si on voulait exprimer cette idée architecturalement, on pourrait créer une nouvelle enveloppe protégeant le visiteur du bâtiment malade.

J'aimerais aussi formuler quelques suggestions plus pragmatiques. Je crois qu'il serait important de prévoir des espaces d'exposition temporaires dans le musée, afin de pouvoir y présenter des expositions thématiques concernant les nombreux groupes ethniques ayant immigré au Canada par Grosse Île. De plus, on devrait prévoir la location de poussettes, fauteuils roulants et bicyclettes, afin d'accomoder les visiteurs, jeunes et moins jeunes, dans leurs déplacements.

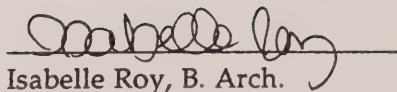
La poésie du “non fonctionnel”.

Ainsi que vous avez pu le constater, la majeure partie de mon intervention porte sur l'importance de ce que j'appellerais le “non-fonctionnel”. Je crois qu'il doit avoir sa place au coeur du projet, au même titre que d'autres considérations plus techniques. Les manifestations artistiques ou symboliques peuvent enrichir la commémoration du site.

De même, la mise en valeur des structures historiques, soit les bâtiments, monuments ou espaces extérieurs nécessitera sûrement de nouvelles constructions. Je crois qu'il est possible et désirable d'utiliser les méthodes de construction et le langage architectural actuels de façon à ce que les nouveaux aménagements s'harmonisent avec les structures existantes.

Il est important de voir dans la réalisation du projet, plus que la recherche d'une solution au problème posé. La poésie doit y avoir sa place.

En terminant, j'aimerais remercier le Service des Parcs de m'avoir ouvert leurs portes et d'avoir mis à ma disposition de nombreux documents techniques, plans et études, afin de me permettre de poursuivre mon projet. Sans leur aide précieuse, je n'aurais évidemment pas pu recueillir toutes les informations nécessaires à la réalisation de mon projet.


Isabelle Roy, B. Arch.

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY OF MONTRÉAL

GROSSE ÎLE: THE IRISH ISLAND

PÁDRAIG BREANDÁN Ó LAIGHIN

**A Brief Presented at A Public Hearing
Conducted by Environment Canada
in Montréal on May 20, 1992**

on Behalf of

ST. PATRICK'S SOCIETY OF MONTRÉAL

1. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT: COMMENT AND CRITIQUE

The main publication of the Parks Service of Environment Canada outlining their proposals for the development of Grosse île is an impressive document.¹ The detailing of the island's environmental context, structural resources, and emotive significance will be of lasting value; and the presentation of aspects of history circumscribed by a particular interpretation of the economic potential of the island viewed as a product - in response, no doubt, to very real socioeconomic exigencies - provides useful contextual clarification of the development enterprise.

If one abstracts the proposed general theme for the development, **Canada: Land of Welcome and Hope**, from its context, the pursuit would be laudable; this country has indeed been a haven and a new beginning for many people from around the world. The main theme through which the general theme is to be expressed, however, **Immigration to Canada via Québec City (1800 - 1939)**, could perhaps more appropriately be pursued in Québec's Bassin Louise area or indeed at Pointe Lévis; there is some obfuscation of the fact that Québec City was the landing point of the great majority of the immigrants during the period. As to the secondary theme of quarantine, Grosse île has been pre-eminent.

What the Parks Service's general theme and expressive themes fail to present in any way consistent with general knowledge about Grosse île is the Irish dimension the island, the perceptions immanent in the term "the Irish island," or "*l'île des Irlandais et Irlandaises*:" what is most obvious is lost or hidden. The Development Concept document relegates the Irish dimension of the island almost to oblivion: explicit references to the Irish are limited to a single sentence - amplified by two further sentences which are footnoted - and two or three throwaway phrases.² With due respect, one cannot just footnote the Great "Famine," *an gorta mór*, in a discussion about Grosse île, unless one is prepared to distort history.

The failure to fully acknowledge momentous though unpalatable events in cursory descriptions of Canadian history is not new; people of Chinese, Japanese, and Jewish origins have their own powerful examples. Official versions of history, especially those prepared for school use, either ignore the tragedy of the Irish at Grosse île entirely, or - as J.M.S. Careless, one of the most widely-read historians of English Canada, does - dismiss the whole matter in two or three lines with vague references to "hundreds" of Irish dying in "emigrant sheds" upon arrival in Canada.³ Your enjoinder "that there should not be too much emphasis on the tragic aspects of the history of Grosse île" (p. 62) is understandable in this context, and in the context of tourism promotion. But in this case perhaps the great significance of the island is being displaced in error: the events of 1832, 1834, and

the late 1840s are profoundly important in the history of Canada's development; people die in their thousands, forty vessels stretching along the shore, more than 25,000 people in quarantine on one day in June 1847,⁴ allegations of wrongdoing, commissions of inquiry, a ~~Scheming~~^{June} landlord, Henry John Temple - probably better known as Lord Palmerston - becoming a Prime Minister of England, the population balance shifting to favour Upper Canada, or Canada West as it was then officially called; and in another island across the seas, two million people starve to death in an artificial "famine." These are events of great history, and they were not without their ennobling features; from them came a significant and lasting transformation of Québec and Canada. Grosse Île without an Irish central theme would be like Louisbourg without a French one.

2. THE IRISH DIMENSION

Grosse Île plays a very important rôle in the consciousness of people of Irish origin, especially those who have made this country their home: a secret island of the great St. Lawrence was the crucible in which the Irish dimension of this country was forged. Perhaps ten thousand or more died on the island or on board quarantined ships at anchor there during a great summer of sorrow, with mass graves on the island being the final resting place for those who, as a monument there puts it, "flying from pestilence and famine in Ireland in the year 1847, found in America but a grave."⁵ The quarantine station had been established there in 1832 in response to a cholera epidemic which left thousands of Irish emigrants buried forever in the sands of Cholera Bay, or in mass graves on Grosse Île and on the Plains of Abraham. The place was not without its heroic aspects, local people toiling and dying there, and out of the sorrow, out of the holocaust - and the use of the term "holocaust" to describe these events goes back at least as far as a public address given Grosse Île in 1909⁶ - from those who survived, from orphans taken into *Canadien* homes, some retaining their own names, some becoming Morins and Gagnons and Carignans, some Bourgeois and Leclair, came those who took their place as builders of a new nation; thenceforth, to be *québécoise* or *québécois* was to be at least in part Irish, in traditional music, in genes; and the influx of the Irish to Upper Canada caused a radical shift in the balance of political power.

3. ACKNOWLEDGING THE IRISHNESS OF GROSSE ÎLE: THE IMPLICATIONS

The Parks Service's document appropriately emphasizes respect for the spirit of the place as a guiding principle behind the proposed

development approach (p. 69); in our view this necessitates a recognition of the Irishness of the island: We are recommending that the main theme of the development be **Grosse île: The Irish Island or Irish Garden of Remembrance**. This is an affirmation of what already exists in the history of the island and traditions surrounding it.

- (a) **Respect for the Spirit of the Place.** Grosse île has been a place of commemoration for people of Irish background at least as far back as 1897, when a great national pilgrimage organized by the Ancient Order of Hibernians took place.⁷ Similar pilgrimages over the years, except during years when access was denied, were the only tangible expression of the historic importance of the island.
- (b) **Tourism Potential.** Your document very appropriately weighs the potential of the island in the context of the proposed development concept to attract tourists to the Chaudière-Appalaches region. The Irish have been visiting the island for a century. A positive, integrated, thematic acknowledgement of the importance of the island to people of Irish background and descent will, in our view, attract more tourists to the area than will be attracted by an implementation of the Parks Service proposal. There are approximately forty million Americans who claim Irish descent, as well as several million Canadians; with the current interest in origins and genealogy Grosse île could become, given the right conditions, a Mecca for the Irish diaspora worldwide.
- (c) **The Québec-Irish Dimension.** Though actual confirmation is hard to come by, it has been suggested that as many as forty per cent of Québécois have Irish ancestors. The importance of Irish music in the development of traditional music in Québec is generally acknowledged. The tragic aspects of the island have a powerful drawing force, but your caveat in this regard (p. 62), especially for some categories of tourists, could be more than balanced by a celebration of the ubiquitous presence of Irish culture in the Québec mosaic.
- (d) **Product: An Extraordinary Omission**

It seems quite extraordinary that your development proposal should omit reference to two of the island's most significant features (the third being the 1847 hospital), namely, the Celtic High Cross and the mass-grave cemetery on the south-western peninsula. What makes your omission even more amazing is that these three Irish-related sites were precisely the main focus of organized tours conducted by the *Corporation pour la mise*

en valeur de Grosse île under the auspices of Parks Canada during the last two seasons.⁸ The only mention of the Cross in the Development Concept document - apart from the Appendix B listing (p. 83) - is the non-specific phrase "not to mention the monument dedicated to the Irish" (p.18). If the Irish features of the island are the most important from a pragmatic standpoint, how can you explicitly ignore them in your statement of themes (p. 47)?

(e) **Product: Boating; Outdoors.** There appears to be some interest in the island's docking facilities on the part of leisure boating interests. We would not favour opening Grosse île for boating and yachting purposes. Several alternate marinas are available, and if others are necessary there are numerous suitable locations available on other islands in the île aux Grues archipelago. Similarly, with respect to the promotion of Grosse île as a scenic location for outdoor activities, many equally good alternatives are available in the area; île d'Orléans has a wonderful blend of environment and habitation, and île aux Grues is very suitable for outdoor pursuits.

(f) **Promotion.** Much has been done to promote an understanding and appreciation of Grosse île as a nexus of Irish interest. Books and countless articles have dealt with the subject, and many documentaries - including one recently produced for Radio Telefís Éireann, the Irish national broadcasting service⁹ - have been produced and distributed nationally and internationally. (As an aside, it is perhaps significant that several books published in this country which detail explicitly the Irish dimension of Grosse île, such as Jordan's [1909] book, are conspicuously absent from the reference works cited in the Development Concept document).

4. A POSSIBLE SECONDARY THEME: IMMIGRATION AND QUARANTINE

Issues relating to quarantine have been the *raison d'être* of an official presence on the island since 1832, and it is fitting that this theme, in association with its necessary concomitant, immigration, be explored in developing the resources of the island. Several of the items under the primary theme of the Parks Service are directly related to the main function of island as a quarantine station. Presenting Grosse île primarily as a focus for immigration is a construction of reality. Many centres in Canada, east and

west, deserve recognition for equally significant status in the immigration process.

5. ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) **Trilingual Signs.** *Ó ba í an Ghaeilge teanga mháthartha bhunáite na ndaoine atá sínte faoin bhfód ar oileán uaigneach seo an Mhór-Lorcáin, sílimid gur chóir - mar chomhartha ómóis dóibh siúd a raibh súil acu le muir ach nach raibh súil acu le huaigh, agus mar chomhlíonadh ar dhualgais idirnáisiúnta Sheirbhís na bPáirceanna - go mbeadh comharthaí uile an oileáin tritheangach go hiomlán, eadhon, i dteanga náisiúnta na hÉireann, an Ghaeilge, agus i dteangacha oifigiúla Cheanada, Fraincis agus Béarla.*

("Since Irish was the mothertongue of the majority of the people who are laid to rest in this lonely island of the Great St. Lawrence, we think it is appropriate - as a mark of respect to them, who looked towards the sea for life but did not expect to find a grave, and in fulfilment of international responsibilities of the Parks Service - that all public signs on the island be fully trilingual, namely, in the national language of Ireland, Irish, and in Canada's official languages, French and English").

- (b) **Restoration of Buildings.** Stabilization and restoration work should continue on the buildings and other structures, especially on the 1847 hospital.
- (c) **Facilities for Visitors.** The provision of washroom facilities and a restaurant would be deemed appropriate, and these should probably be located in an existing building in the "village" area.
- (d) **Mass Graves.** Work needs to be done on clearing the undergrowth from the mass grave area on the south-western peninsula; eventually, after the area has been appropriately delimited and indicated with trilingual signs and perhaps other markers, the white wooden crosses should be removed.

6. TERMINOLOGICAL ISSUES

A number of terminological inexactitudes in the Development

Concept document cannot be left without comment.

- (a) It is incorrect - geographically, historically, culturally, and politically - to use the epithet "British" to describe Irish people. Page 9 alone has several such unacceptable references. If one wishes to argue to the contrary on historical grounds, one needs to be informed that between the years 1832 and 1860, Ireland was politically part of the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland": The British of that time (or indeed any other time) never made the claim that the Irish were British. Why do the Canadian Parks Service?
- (b) References to the Great "Famine" of 1846 to 1848 as the "Great Potato Famine" (as on p. 9) are misleading, and may be considered ^{insulting} contemptuous. For a discussion of this issue, consult the appended documents (Ó Laighin [1988, p. 93 and 1989, p. 3]) which constitute part of this brief; as well as dealing with issues relating to the Great "Famine" of 1847, they provide interpretations of the place of Grosse Île in Canadian, Québec, and Irish history.
- (c) Reference to "Britain" as the "mother country" of immigrants prior to 1867 is unacceptable terminologically and in its implications. What appears to be a deliberate effort to avoid mentioning and contextualizing the massive influx of Irish immigrants during that period is inadmissible.
- (d) Use of the British cartographic term "Londonderry" without note or comment to describe the city of *Doire* (in Irish) or Derry is unacceptable.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the matter of Grosse Île, the Development Concept as presented is unacceptable; a radical revision is necessary. You cannot easily rewrite history to make it conform to current political exigencies: A country which marginalizes its history is a country which destroys its own soul, and a country without a soul will stagnate economically as well as culturally.

The *Montréal Star* in 1909 commented as follows in an editorial on the unveiling of the Celtic High Cross at Grosse Île:

"The world thinks better of a people who can thus keep green the memory of their dead. It reminds us that all

of life is not tinsel and gold, tinkling cymbal and sounding brass. We are not forever thinking of success. We can spare time to kneel by the grave of plucky and high-hearted failure and to raise upon its sorrowful mound an enduring memorial. The addresses which were delivered at Grosse Isle have an inspiring note. The presence of many French-Canadians and their pastors and leaders reminds us of how great a part the men and women of that nationality played in succoring the sick and the orphaned of that deep tragedy. The Celtic cross which has been reared on the sacred spot will recall to every passer-by the whole sad story, and bear in upon his consciousness the fact that Irish men and women of this generation have not forgotten."¹⁰

We wish to state in closing that, in our view, the Parks Service of Environment Canada bring an outstanding level of professional competence, a great concern for detail, and a great respect for our human heritage to all of the historic sites which are entrusted to their care; in these matters they are without parallel among similar agencies in countries across the world.

With a development concept revised in accordance with the recommendations expressed here, Grosse Île under the care of Parks Canada will be a reminder for many of stormtossed seas, and a beacon of light which can help to transform our world.

TARA GOLF ASSOCIATION INC.

TARA GOLF ASSOCIATION INC.



BRIEF
TO THE ENVIRONMENT CANADA PARKS SERVICE COMMISSION
ON THE
GROSSE ILE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

MAY 1992

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This short report is an attempt to indicate the position of the Tara Golf Association on the proposed development of Gross Ile by Environment Canada Parks Service.

A) Who We Are:

The Tara Golf Association Inc., is an association that represents approximately one hundred and fifty amateur golfers and their families residing for the most part in the Province of Quebec, although some do reside in Ontario as well as elsewhere in Canada. We are Canadians of Irish birth or origin essentially, but not solely. Besides sponsoring and conducting seven or eight Golf Tournaments for our membership on a yearly basis, we have as one of our objectives to maintain and promote the culture, history and best traditions of the Irish people and to work with people of Irish descent as well as with people of similar desires and aspirations in Canada for the mutual betterment of our collective situation.

It is in this latter context that we are pleased to respond to the invitation of Environment Canada Parks Service to submit our Brief with respect to the proposed Development Concept of Gross Ile as a National Historic Site.

B) Tara's Orientation As To The Development:

We are especially pleased that Environment Canada Parks Service as an arm of the Federal Government has recognized the need to develop Gross Ile as a National Historic Site. We ardently salute your organization for its elaborate plans as outlined in your booklet produced for "Public Consultation". We do, however, take exception to your suggestion on page 62 that "the tragic aspects of history of Gross Ile" should be deemphasized, as the alternative would be for visitors to the island to be entertained by the romantic "legends and stories of Captain Lachance" et al.

Under no circumstances can we condone the denial or concealment of truth, especially historic truth. To do so would constitute a disservice to today's generation and future generations, and would obviously be at variance with what the noble objectives of your committee stand for.

No more than the Jewish people would want to relegate to oblivion the tragedy of Treblinka, would the Irish people want to forget the tragedy and historic significance of Gross Ile. That historic Island is our Treblinka for it enshrouds in mass graves the mortal remains of more than twelve thousand native Irish men, women and children. These innocent victims of political chicanery in the land of their birth, along with countless compatriots were forced to confront a cold and relentless Atlantic Ocean in sailing vessels devoid of the most basic sanitary conditions. For those who reached Gross Ile success was a historic achievement, for cholera and typhus had taken their toll in the trek across the ocean. The Celtic Cross on Gross Ile commemorates, as well, those countless dead about whom a journalist of the period wrote, "The bed of the ocean is white with their bones".

C) Gateway To Canada:

We recognize that Gross Ile represents for the Irish especially our gateway to this great and bountiful land of Canada, and we have always responded to Canada's needs in an equally munificent way. Those Irish people strong enough to survive the cholera and fever rampant in the ships in Cholera Bay and Gross Ile, fanned out across the country to help build the railways, the bridges and the canals, the structures and sinews of the finest country in the world.

D) Monument To Canadians:

We postulate that Gross Ile is not merely significant to Irish people and Irish-Canadians and Irish Americans, it is, moreover, a sort of silent cenotaph to the heroic Canadian doctors and nurses, priests and religious orders, Protestants and Catholics, French and English men and women who dedicated time and energy and even their lives in a valiant effort to save and tend the greatest slew of suffering humanity that has ever visited Canada's shores. And that heroic altruism of Canadians was memorably displayed at Gross Ile in 1847 and 1848 for Canada then accepted not only it's full quota of Irish immigrants, but in addition, several boat loads of a despairing Irish diaspora diverted from landing at American Ports by American Authorities.

Gross Ile should in some tangible way commemorate also the great Quebec Ecclesiastics who made it possible for so many French Canadian Families to open their hearts and their homes to the thousands of Irish orphan children disgorged by the "coffin ships" at the portals of that scenic isle.

E) Not America's Well Kept Secret:

We feel that the true narration of the facts will rightly reveal a Canadian generosity of spirit of gigantic proportion, and this can truly be a historic legacy for posterity. Under no circumstances can we condone Gross Ile being camouflaged under the pseudonym of "America's Well Kept Secret"; or is it Canada's Well Kept Secret?

We are proud of our history, and accordingly, we should applaud and commemorate appropriately those heroic men and women on Gross Ile who made the supreme sacrifice. Some may say, "They'll have their reward in the hereafter, for 'greater love hath no man who lays down his life for his friends'".

F) Concluding Remarks:

The Tara Golf Association recommends that Gross Ile as a National Historic Park should not merely reflect a part of Canada's beautiful natural topography, but above all, it should display in a very tangible manner, the native goodness, decency and heroism of Canadians, demonstrated for posterity nowhere better than at Gross Ile. As a National Historic Park, Gross Ile should provide a genuine interpretive program and visitor resource centre for all Canadians as well as for visitors from abroad.

We recommend also that the south western peninsula of the island, dominated by the Celtic Cross, be set aside as a fitting and dignified memorial ground, - a garden of remembrance for the innocent people interred there as elsewhere on the island in such ominous numbers; let us also recognize there fittingly, as well as in our history books, the many brave, heroic Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice in attempting to save a sick and suffering diaspora of Irish origin. Are their deeds and recorded exploits not worthy of more honorable acclaim than the fictitious exploits attributed to some of our "heroes" of stature in some of our history books?

Because of the prominent Irish contribution to the Canadian mosaic, we feel certain that Environment Canada Parks Service, Canada's Green Plan, will respect our concern, and insist that the Irish presence on Gross Ile will always be prominently and appropriately commemorated.

The Tara Golf Association thanks the Committee members of Environment Canada Parks Service for this opportunity to make its views known on the Gross Ile Development Concept.

John O'Shea

President

THE IRELAND-CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

GROSSE ILE - THE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

BRIEF PRESENTED BY:

THE IRELAND-CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TO

ENVIRONMENT CANADA

CANADIAN PARK SERVICE

In connection with the development of the Grosse Ile National Historic Site

Montreal, May 20th, 1992.

This brief is presented by the **IRELAND-CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** in response to an invitation to participate in the public consultation program for Grosse Ile National Historic Site.

The **IRELAND-CANADA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering commercial links between Ireland (both North and South) and Canada, and to providing a forum for the development of the Irish business community in Canada.

The Chamber does not normally become involved in non-commercial matters, however, the issues raised by the proposed development of Grosse Ile are so fundamental to the interests of the Irish community in Canada that its members have decided to make known their views during the public consultation process.

The historic importance of Grosse Ile to the Irish community is indisputable. While Grosse Ile served as a transit point for many thousands of Irish immigrants, it is also the final resting place of at least thirteen thousand Irish men, women and children; the island contains the mass graves of some 13,000 unfortunate Irish immigrants who perished both during the journey to Canada and at Grosse Ile.

We believe that any development of the Grosse Ile Historical Site must pay homage to these tragic individuals. It must recognize that Grosse Ile is a gravesite to be treated with respect and decorum.

In the publication entitled "Grosse Ile National Historic Site - Development Concept", we note a systematic effort to ignore or, at best, de-emphasize the tragic aspects of Grosse Ile and we take strong exception to that effort. That effort can be summarized by reference to a paragraph found on page 62 of the document which reads as follows:

"It is also felt that there should not be too much emphasis on the tragic aspects of the history of Grosse Ile. On the contrary, the painful events of 1832 and 1847, which have often been over emphasized in the past, need to be put back into perspective, without robbing them of their importance".

All civilized human societies are bound by certain fundamental beliefs which define us as civilized. Amongst these fundamental beliefs is the concept of respect for the dead. We note with sadness that neither the Development Concept publication nor the two maps supplied with the publication contains any reference even to the existence of the mass graves on the island. The existence on Grosse Ile of mass graves, along with countless hundreds of individual graves, demands a sensitive approach to any development of the island. Any other approach would be to license the desecration of graveyards.

Individuals, given the frailty of human nature, are entitled to have selective memories but society as a whole has a duty to recognize both the beauty and the tragedy of its past. To ignore a sad history multiplies the tragedy and distorts the past. We are all too familiar with the international outrage caused by Japanese school textbooks which de-emphasize Japan's more brutal

involvement in World War II. We know the problems that the Japanese attitude to its war crimes has caused for victims of Japanese brutality such as the Chinese and the Koreans. The underlining theme of the Development Concept proposed for Grosse Ile has its parallel in Japanese textbooks that de-emphasize Japan's involvement in World War II.

The development of Grosse Ile must recognize the tragedy of the Irish famine immigrants and gravesites must be protected as areas of particular spiritual significant to one of Canada's founding peoples. We suggest that Grosse Ile be developed, at least in part, as a famine memorial to recognize the enormous price paid by the Irish in earning their place in Canadian society. We are ready to work with Environment Canada with a view to achieving that end.

THE IRISH SHOW RADIO CENTRE-VILLE

"They are going! They are going! The Irish are going with a vengeance...Soon a Celt will be as rare on the banks of the Liffey as a Red Man on the banks of the Manhattan."

(quoted in Paddy's Lament:
Ireland 1846-1847 by Thomas
Gallagher p.143)

With these cold words the prestigious London Times cheered as over a million Irish were forced to leave their native land, while another million suffered a slow death from starvation and disease. For many of those who took ship to escape the hunger, their wooden vessels became their coffins as they died on route to North America. Others reached the land of welcome and hope only to succumb to the fever that had followed potato blight and had accompanied the refugees on their ships.

In the space of three short years, over a million people died, and a million were driven from their land, an ancient language and a rich culture were dealt a blow from which they have not recovered. The social and economic effects of this horrific nightmare still haunt Ireland today.

We must pose the question if Environment Canada's Parks Service understands what this means to the Irish and their descendants throughout the world?

The Hunger, as all know today, was not inevitable. It was caused by the political and economic decisions of a foreign administration whose indifference and callous calculations allowed the Irish to starve while food was being exported from Ireland. Like many famines,

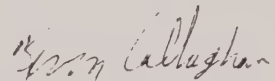
past and present, it didn't have to happen. But it did, and that is why so many organisations representing the Irish community have come together to ask that the victims of the Irish Hunger might have honor, while victims of famine, present and future, might have hope.

While many people from many places came through Grosse Isle and Quebec to begin a new life in Canada, the Irish have a sad but special relationship with the island. Like Moses seeing the Promised Land but unable to enter, many Irish died on arrival and their bones now lie buried on Grosse Isle, a sacred symbol to Irish Canadians of a dark past and a brighter future.

Environment Canada's Parks Service does superlative work in creating and maintaining Canada's parks. Nevertheless, in the development of Grosse Isle, we call upon you to do something more to show vision. Canada has, indeed, been a welcome refuge and bountiful home to millions of immigrants, and this should be celebrated. But what of the dark side—of the things that forced people to leave home and family to flee a living hell or a slow death? Should we not say that such things must not be? Should we not do what we can to ensure that such things are not?

Radio Centreville's Irish Show calls on Environment Canada's Parks Service to develop Grosse Isle as a Famine Memorial Park with the purpose of cherishing the memory of those who lie there and serving as a reminder that evils like the Irish Hunger need not and must not happen again. We call on you to work in consultation with representative Irish and Irish Canadian organisations to

build a monument to honor the dreams of the Irish dead and light a beacon of hope for the world's living. Such a Park would be a symbol to the millions of North Americans who carry Irish blood in their veins, while, if a portion of the entrance fee went to famine relief, would also be a concrete manifestation of Canada's values and ideals.



Kevin Callaghan

the Irish Show
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UNITED IRISH SOCIETIES OF MONTREAL INC.

United Irish Societies of Montreal Inc.

(ORGANIZERS OF THE ST. PATRICK'S PARADE)

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BRYAN SCOTT

May 20, 1992

BRIEF REGARDING GROSSE ISLE HISTORIC SITE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Irish people all over the world relate to Grosse Isle as the main monument to the tragedy of famine, deportation from Ireland and death caused by the deplorable catastrophe placed upon them in 1847. Grosse Isle and Cholera Bay are memorials in Irish History that never shall be forgotten. The corpses of the Irish immigrants were buried throughout the island and numerous others died while attempting to wade ashore from boats anchored in the Bay. The two main years concerned are 1832 and 1847.

When Parks Canada Services proposes Grosse Isle as a National Historic Site it must consider the international significance to the Irish. The Irish, and no other people, have impacted this island's history by the tragic years of 1832 and 1847. To overlook this or attempt to emphasize a general theme of Canada: Land of Welcome and Hope results in a distortion of history. This island is an historical site for the many nationalities who passed by and through it. But, it is an international historic site for the thousands of Irish immigrants who tragically died on it.

When Parks Canada proposes a development concept for the island it relates to many aspects of promotion and downplays the history of the Irish tragedy.

....2

The promotion of this island as an historical site is positive from the aspects of tourism and proper upkeep. But, we strongly recommend the following recognition and implementation;

1. The history of the Irish tragedies of 1832 and 1847 on the island be emphasized,
2. On appropriate occasions the Irish community shall promote pilgrimages to the island,
3. Buildings and sites relating to the periods of 1832 and 1847 be identified as related Irish memorials,
4. Souvenirs relating to the Celtic Cross and Irish tragedies not be promoted,
5. Reasonable access to the island and reasonable parking facilities on the mainland, during the seasonal period, be guaranteed.

Don Pidgeon
Historian

N.B. Certains mémoires contiennent des annexes qui ne sont pas incluses dans ce recueil. Elles sont disponibles sur demande à l'adresse suivante:

Certain briefs contain annexes which are not included in this document. They are available upon request at the following address:

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